

4/5/2014

Page 1

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
DIVISION OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

A public hearing to receive public comment on the
following proposed administrative rules:

General Interpreter - General Rules

At Michigan School For The Deaf,
1235 West Court Street
Flint, Michigan,
Commencing at 9:00 a.m.,
Saturday, April 5, 2014,
Before Rhonda M. Foster, RMR, RPR, CSR-3612.

1 Flint, Michigan

2 Saturday, April 5, 2014

3 About 9:20 a.m.

4 DIRECTOR MATT WESAW: Good morning, everyone.
5 We are going to start, get started with some basics.
6 We still have some people who are in line getting
7 signed in. I just want to cover a few things before we
8 actually start taking testimony.

9 Everyone who wants to speak should have got a
10 card like this. In the upper right-hand corner is a
11 number; the order of which you will be speaking. So
12 when -- I will be calling off the different names and
13 the number. So as your number gets closer, start
14 working your way down to the microphone. That will be
15 helpful. So far we are up to 40 speakers, so we are
16 going to have a full morning. We do have to be out of
17 here by 12:30 for another function.

18 So if you -- I will cover this again in a
19 minute, but if you don't get an opportunity to present,
20 the public comment period is open, you can submit your
21 comments until the end of the day, April 7th. So
22 please review the information on the sheets here.
23 Basically, be mindful of the time. The number in the
24 box above corresponds in the order in which you will be
25 called. Your comments will be part of the official

1 record.

2 Please be respectful of all others at all
3 times. And please focus your comments on the rule.
4 This is not a Q and A time. This is for your -- this
5 is your opportunity to come up and comment on the
6 rules. If the panel who I will identify in a second
7 has a question of you, they can ask the question, but
8 that really is the only give or take that we will have.

9 If you come up to make comments, please spell
10 your name slowly so the interpreters pick it up, and
11 also for the court reporter for the official record,
12 and the CART lady so that she has the ability to get
13 your name accurately.

14 And again, please watch your number, and when
15 you start to get close, just kind of make your way up
16 to the podium.

17 Okay. Before we begin, I would like to thank
18 all the people who have worked tirelessly getting the
19 rules and the regulations prepared for this public
20 meeting. I know that I will leave people off, but I
21 wasn't here the first time around, but please note your
22 efforts did not go unrecognized.

23 I would first like to thank Sheryl Emery and
24 Dan Levy for all their tireless work, and the other
25 members of the Rules Committee, the Division staff,

1 Karlee Rose, Amanda Niven, and Christine Hill, for
2 their efforts in developing most of what you see in the
3 current proposed draft.

4 I would also like to publicly thank them for
5 their work in preparing for this public hearing in all
6 the Advisory Council Meetings.

7 If I can just ask those people to stand real
8 briefly that I just mentioned. Christine is over here.
9 Dan is down there. I don't see Sheryl.

10 I would like to thank the members of the
11 Advisory Council, Chair Mel Whalen, who was out today
12 for some medical reasons. We are going to miss her.
13 Helen Boucher, Dianna McKittrick, Todd Morrison,
14 Franklyn Ash, who is the panel here. Frieda Morrison
15 and Janet Juris, very instrumental in working on
16 finding the best possible presentation we can make.
17 And also, I want to mention Chris Hunter and Maureen
18 Wallace who are the authors of 204. I think we owe a
19 big round of applause for those two.

20 There are many more who have put their hearts
21 into drafting the document that will help to improve
22 the quality of life of the community. I need to
23 mention additional members of the Department, Lori
24 Vinson, who is out of town again on a family issue;
25 Leslee Fritz, the Deputy Director at the registration

1 table. Their work to get us to this point cannot go
2 unmentioned.

3 I thank you all for your contributions. And
4 also to you who have entered -- either sent in comments
5 already or are here present today to present your
6 comments.

7 I want to thank the interpreters who are
8 here, helping us out. If you want to raise your hand,
9 we will recognize you, your efforts.

10 I would like to thank CART for being here,
11 and the court reporter. And a big thanks to the School
12 For the Deaf for hosting us.

13 My name is Matt Wesaw, and I am the Director
14 of the Department of Civil Rights.

15 Okay. Folks, now we are getting to the
16 official part.

17 This is a public hearing on the proposed
18 administrative rules for the Deaf Persons' Interpreter
19 Act. This hearing is being conducted on behalf of the
20 Department of Civil Rights Division on Deaf and Hard of
21 Hearing.

22 This hearing is being called to order at
23 9:20, April 5th, 2014, at the Michigan School For the
24 Deaf in Flint, Michigan.

25 This hearing was published in three

1 newspapers of general circulation, as well as the
2 Michigan Register, Issue Number 5, of 2014, published
3 April 1st, 2014. This hearing is being conducted in
4 accordance with Public Act 306 of 1969, as amended,
5 also known as Administrative Procedures Act.

6 Again, my name is Matt Wesaw, and I will be
7 facilitating the hearing today.

8 Please know today's hearing will not be
9 conducted using a question and answer format. Instead,
10 we are here today to receive your comments on the
11 proposed rules. If you wish to speak, please make sure
12 that you have signed in, and indicate your desire to
13 speak on this card. We will call on speakers in the
14 order in which the comment cards were turned in.

15 When you come forward to speak, please
16 identify yourself with your name and address. Again,
17 slowly spell your name, as well as the organization you
18 represent, if you do, so that this information may be
19 transcribed into the hearing report.

20 Due to the large volume of participants who
21 wish to speak today, we are asking you to limit your
22 testimony to three minutes.

23 I have asked Lee Gonzales to be our
24 timekeeper. Lee will raise his hand when you have one
25 minute remaining. And then when you have reached the

1 three-minute mark, he will stand up.

2 Again, I ask you, please be respectful of the
3 time periods. We would like everybody to be able to
4 speak if possible.

5 If you have additional comments, you may
6 submit that in writing or ASL on video. You may leave
7 them at the registration desk today or submit them to
8 our Department no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 7th.

9 After the public hearing and the close of the
10 public comment period, the Department will consider all
11 comments and determine whether any changes to the
12 presently proposed rules are required.

13 The final rules will then be submitted for
14 final legal editing and review, and then submission
15 through the legislature.

16 We are not prepared to predict an effective
17 date for these rules, but do expect to present them to
18 the legislature in time for them to be promulgated
19 before the end of the current legislative session. We
20 are committed to that, folks.

21 Okay. There may be times during the comment
22 period where we may have to take a break for the
23 interpreters, or if things go fast and there is a lull,
24 we may take a quick break, but we will announce that
25 because it has to be official. And, again, we have to

1 be out of here at 12:30.

2 So I am going to call off the first three or
3 four presenters in their order. Presenter number one,
4 and I apologize if I mess up anybody's name, Gina
5 Colombo, you are number one; Debby Dietch is number
6 two; Roseline Lambert is number three; Karen Bailey,
7 number four; and Kathy Mitchell, number five. You
8 folks want to start making your way up.

9 Again, thank you all.

10 GINA COLOMBO (Through interpreter): Hello.
11 My name is Gina, G-i-n-a, C-o-l-o-m-b-o.

12 Okay. I had a bad experience with the VRI
13 when I was in the hospital. Because there was a lack
14 of an interpreter, I was very frustrated with doctors
15 and such. And some doctors have not really been aware
16 of the laws providing interpreters. So I was hoping
17 that after the rules were passed and regulations, that
18 we needed to have a card or something that we could
19 present to the doctors and something that would tell
20 them that they needed to follow this law and rules.

21 Thank you.

22 DIRECTOR WESAW: Is Debby here? Please.
23 Also, if you change your mind, you do not have to
24 speak.

25 DEBBY DIETCH (Through interpreter): Hello.

1 My name is Debby Dietch, D-e-b-b-y, D-i-e-t-c-h.

2 So I have a hearing loss of 100 percent in
3 one ear and 80 in the other. But I speak very well. I
4 have a situation where doctors think I am hearing
5 because I speak very well. So it is a very, very
6 difficult situation when they determine or they judge
7 whether or not I am deaf of hearing.

8 But no matter what, if I request an
9 interpreter, they should respect my request. Because I
10 know I need one and they don't.

11 And the other thing is that for interpreters,
12 I think it would be a good idea for them to become
13 certified. Because that would show that -- the level
14 of their skill. And then we could be able to have that
15 effective communication for the deaf.

16 Thank you.

17 ROSELINE LAMBERT (Through interpreter):
18 Hello. Is someone voicing for me? Okay. Great. I
19 will voice for myself then.

20 My name is R-o-s-i-e, Rosie, Lambert,
21 L-a-m-b-e-r-t.

22 And I am here in support of my best friend.
23 She had a sad month last month and she wasn't able to
24 be here. Due to her advice, I have suggested that
25 police stations in this area who aren't aware of the

1 deaf, also the courts, as well -- her daughter went in
2 and informed the court that her mother was deaf, and
3 they didn't believe her, to come in and have a seat,
4 and she wasn't able to see, and so she had moved over.
5 So the police had told her to move, and she kept
6 saying, I can't hear, I can't hear. And they cuffed
7 her for no reason and put her up against the wall. And
8 her daughter was saying, my mother is deaf, she needs
9 an interpreter. And they put her in jail for four days
10 without an interpreter. And I choose not to name her,
11 but I ask for prayers, and I ask that you pray for the
12 Howell police station, actually all the police stations
13 everywhere. They need to be educated about deaf people
14 and what our rights are.

15 KAREN BAILEY (Through interpreter): My name
16 is Karen, K-a-r-e-n, Bailey, B-a-i-l-e-y. I live in
17 Ann Arbor.

18 And I wanted to say I moved to Michigan
19 somewhat recently. And my experience with interpreters
20 have been all over the board. Some interpreters have
21 been excellent. And other interpreters, not so great.
22 Some haven't been certified, or they have a low level
23 certification. Some haven't been qualified for that
24 particular situation, as well.

25 For example, I recently experienced a medical

1 emergency. And I was in St. Joe's Hospital. That
2 hospital had a contract with three agencies. But they
3 tended to use one particular agency because this agency
4 had cheaper rates. The interpreters had subpar
5 certification. So my service in the hospital was also
6 subpar. My communication with the doctor was not
7 great. I am DeafBlind. And I can't access VRI. So
8 again and again, I have had to tell them, I need a live
9 interpreter. And then they bring a live interpreter
10 who is not qualified. A live interpreter who didn't
11 know medical terminology.

12 So I want the rules to pass, and I want some
13 teeth behind it so we can force these businesses to
14 provide qualified interpreters.

15 Karen Bailey, B-a-i-l-e-y.

16 DIRECTOR WESAW: Coming up on the list,
17 Michael Morrison, Carole Mair, Kevin Morrison, and Pam
18 and Jeff Klock, K-l-o-c-k.

19 KATHY MITCHELL (Through interpreter): Good
20 morning. My name is Kathy, K-a-t-h-y, M-i-t-c-h-e-l-l.

21 I am a deaf social worker. And I have been
22 working for about 20 years. And I wanted to speak
23 specifically about the EIPA, which is the educational
24 interpreters.

25 About two days ago, I had gone into a

1 conference, and I was sitting with a U.S. Congressman
2 by the name of Ron Dellmus, D-e-l-l-m-u-s. And he was
3 making a comment that was really inspiring.

4 And I know coming in here this morning, as I
5 was driving, I was thinking about it. And I thought he
6 is right. And I am so glad to see so many deaf people
7 here. And I know your time is now to stand up and to
8 speak out. Tell your legislators, tell them what
9 experiences you had.

10 Let me tell you what he said. If you don't
11 do anything, then who wins? The hearing people.
12 Hearing people are going to gain the control, and we
13 can't let that happen.

14 I am the mother of three children. So I have
15 the option to send them to public schools or to private
16 schools to make sure that they have quality education.
17 And they do fine.

18 My brother and sister have deaf children, and
19 they struggle to make sure that those schools have good
20 interpreters, and they struggle for equal access, while
21 my children have no trouble at all. Deaf children
22 didn't have that. And that's a big civil rights issue,
23 equal access for language access.

24 So as I am reading about the EIPA and I see
25 all these interpreters that are complaining about this.

1 They want to lower the standards. But I ask, why? Are
2 we going to accept that? I will not accept that for my
3 children. Deaf children should have the equal access
4 as my children are.

5 So please, continue with the -- (testimony
6 inaudible due to applause by audience).

7 So I am going to ask you, Mr. Wesaw, and I am
8 counting on you. You are representing us; then please
9 show us your support. And I was sad that I didn't see
10 you yesterday at the conference. And your assistant
11 did not stay to hear all the wonderful speakers, the
12 deaf speakers that were there. So I am hoping that
13 next time your staff would stay and show the support
14 for the union.

15 Thank you.

16 MICHAEL MORRISON (Through interpreter): I
17 was born and raised deaf. I have had lots and lots of
18 experiences. And then one thing that I really want to
19 talk about is the law.

20 Sorry. My name is Michael Morrison.

21 I was born and raised deaf. And I know this
22 world. I know the services aren't great.

23 And what we really, really, really want is
24 for you to go and vote. Please, go. Come on, raise
25 your hands. Who is going to vote? Raise your hands.

1 Shame on you. Everybody's hand should be up.
2 Remember, all of you, when we go to vote, you need to
3 be the ones in there. They need to see the numbers and
4 know that we have them. If you don't show up, then
5 they will think, oh, this community is not worth it.
6 So I am encouraging you to go, get your pass to go. We
7 need to get in there and show the officials. All
8 right? You with me? Come on. I don't see enough
9 hands. Who is deaf? Raise your hand. Who's deaf?
10 That's awesome. All right. We need to keep that
11 larger than the hearing.

12 CAROLE MAIR: (Through interpreter): Hello.
13 My name is Carole, C-a-r-o-l-e, don't forget the "e,"
14 M-a-i-r.

15 I had the experience last October where I was
16 taken to the emergency room at the hospital. The nurse
17 brought in the VRI. And, you know, my arm was like
18 this (indicating). I had -- they had attached my arm.
19 I couldn't move my left arm. They brought in the VRI.
20 I am trying to look at the nurse. I am trying to sign
21 one-handed. And when I would move my left arm, I would
22 get pain shooting pain all the way up my arm. So I am
23 trying to work with the VRI. I am trying to sign. I
24 am watching the VRI screen. And I am like, you know, I
25 don't know if they are saying exactly what I want them

1 to say or what. I said, I don't know if they
2 understand me. I am trying to sign my best one-handed.

3 So anyways, they did a bunch of tests. And
4 they thought that I had a stroke.

5 Later on in the afternoon, my children showed
6 up, all of my children showed up. They are like, no,
7 no, no, no VRI. I said, I am stuck, look at my arm.
8 What do you want me to do? It was hard for me to keep
9 up with just the one hand that was working. And my
10 kids fought for me.

11 And they got a live interpreter for me.
12 Finally. Late in the afternoon, finally the
13 interpreter showed up. I am still like this with my
14 arm, I am still trying to sign, and I am still trying
15 to see if the interpreter is saying what I want to say,
16 if they are interpreting it accurately. And we finally
17 got things straightened out.

18 So please, please, please have live
19 interpreters all the time for deaf people in the
20 hospital.

21 Thank you.

22 KEVIN MORRISON (Through interpreter): My
23 name is Kevin Morrison, M-o-r-r-i-s-o-n.

24 I want to talk about VRI at the hospital too.
25 I will never forgot it. I haven't been able to forget

1 it.

2 My wife was pregnant, went into labor. We
3 asked for a live interpreter. Got an immediate no. We
4 use VRI. I said no, I want a live interpreter. My
5 wife was there. My wife was over here. The VRI was
6 way on the other side of the room. VRI never showed
7 up. Waited and waited and waited and waited for over
8 15 minutes. And finally, you know, we requested we
9 want a live interpreter. And they said no, no, no. We
10 waited all afternoon, I think. And I will never
11 forget, we waited until like 2:30 in the morning. My
12 wife almost had to have a C-section, or a problem in
13 the hospital. They wanted me to write back and forth.
14 I kept saying wait. Communication wasn't any good.
15 Finally got a live interpreter, and we had successful
16 communication finally.

17 And then also court, a bad experience there,
18 I asked for an interpreter. They brought in an
19 interpreter, and I didn't -- I asked if they were
20 certified. I didn't think they were. I found out they
21 were. They didn't really sign professionally. It was
22 kind of stop and start and, you know, I complained to
23 my lawyer about the interpreter, and I got in trouble.
24 I got in trouble. I was just wanting to check their
25 certification and everything else, and I kept trying to

1 tell them, that's the Court's responsibility to decide
2 if they are qualified or not; not mine. And if they
3 are not qualified, they should be excused until I get a
4 qualified interpreter.

5 So I really want this passed so I am not the
6 one getting punished, they should be the one getting
7 punished, and I have a voice to speak back.

8 Thank you.

9 DIRECTOR WESAW: Pam and Jeff are up. Are
10 they still here? Okay.

11 After Pam and Jeff, Nancy Asher. And I
12 apologize, this was tough to read, it looks like maybe
13 Bell Burdus (phonetic). Okay. He is leaving. Lynn
14 Sedlacko, Peter Virtue, and Danielle Ward are coming
15 up.

16 PAM KLOCK: Good morning. I am going to be
17 using my native language. Good morning. I am going to
18 be using my native language, which is English. And
19 because of the emotional nature of this, I am going to
20 be reading my remarks.

21 We have sent in a few letters discussing the
22 proposed rules and regulations governing sign language
23 interpreters in educational settings. And after
24 reading those public remarks that were submitted by
25 professionals that are employed here in Michigan in the

1 schools, we felt it was very important that we remind
2 you that at the heart of this entire discussion are our
3 minor children who depend on sign language for their
4 education, and on those interpreters that provide that
5 education.

6 As parents of a profoundly deaf 11-year-old
7 in a mainstream program, we think that letter
8 supporting the lowering of the standards would affect
9 his education and that of his peers. And that is not
10 to their benefit to lower those standards. Under IPA
11 our children are guaranteed an equitable education, and
12 that would be impossible to provide with low
13 certifications.

14 We have read numerous letters which suggest
15 allowing educational interpreters a grace period to get
16 the EIPA 4.0; yet none of those address the concerns of
17 our child's education during that three-year
18 improvement phase. And we are not willing as parents
19 to put our child's education on hold for any length of
20 time while people are brought up to speed.

21 There are also letters that talk about the
22 flexibility in allowing elementary and secondary
23 certification in either setting. And yet Boys Town,
24 who administers the test, developed two separate and
25 distinct platforms because students in elementary and

1 secondary settings have such vastly different
2 educational and language needs. And it is for that
3 reason that teachers in the state of Michigan also pay
4 elementary or secondary certifications.

5 Because we understand and the data that we
6 see, that EIPA on the average is lower than what we
7 have requested previously. We understand that maybe a
8 two-year period starting in September of 2016,
9 interpreters may have to be allowed in that have a 2.7.
10 The reason we are picking that number is because the
11 average retest increase is .3 to a .8 which would take
12 their level up to what we consider to be an acceptable
13 level of skills for our child.

14 In the educational community, if you and
15 Council are truly putting our children first and
16 protecting their rights to a fair and appropriate
17 education, you will uphold the proposed rules to
18 increase the certification for educational
19 interpreters.

20 And we would like to once more reiterate that
21 the systematic failure of allowing low standards will
22 ultimately affect our children for the rest of their
23 lives. And we ask that you put that bar high and you
24 keep it high for their well-being.

25 NANCY ASHER (Through interpreter): My name

1 is Nancy Asher, but friends of mine call me Nan, so
2 many of you know me as Nan.

3 I am here as a hard of hearing advocate, and
4 I wore hearing aids for over 45 years, and my concern,
5 the way things are written, if you look at it, at the
6 original PA 204, there was a definition that identified
7 what a deaf person was. And I cannot find that
8 definition anywhere anymore with the new rule or on the
9 Office of Civil Rights or DOHH website. And the
10 original rule said a deaf person means a person whose
11 hearing is totally impaired or whose hearing with or
12 without amplification is so seriously impaired that the
13 primary need of receiving spoken language is through
14 other sensory input including but not limited to lip
15 reading, sign language, finger spelling or reading,
16 which -- and that second part, it includes hard of
17 hearing people or deaf, whatever you want to call us.
18 And I am afraid this -- the way the rules are, you
19 can't find a definition for deaf anymore, you can't
20 find a definition for hard of hearing, and you can't
21 find a definition for DeafBlind.

22 And it really needs to be in there because in
23 2006, State of Michigan versus Arnold DeMann, a hard of
24 hearing person, because he didn't know sign language,
25 the Courts ruled he was not deaf enough to need any

1 accommodations; that included interpreter, CART, lip
2 reading, anything. I really don't want this to happen
3 to other hard of hearing people because, you know,
4 that's me, and that's 1.2 million other people in
5 Michigan.

6 So that's my concern; hard of hearing are not
7 forgotten with all of this. As some of us do sign, but
8 most of us do not.

9 Thank you.

10 PETER VIRTUE (Through interpreter): My name
11 is Peter Virtue, V-i-r-t-u-e.

12 And I just had a thought, but I am going to
13 hold that for just a second. One of the things I see
14 before or I said before is that, you know, I didn't ask
15 to be deaf. You know, back in the 50s, doctors said
16 that, you know, around that time, you know, 1950s, you
17 know, your son needs his tonsils removed, you know,
18 because that's what they did back then, right? So my
19 tonsils were taken out. Nothing wrong with my tonsils
20 but they were taken out. You know, got an ear
21 infection, became deaf. So the medical profession made
22 me deaf. Therefore, the medical profession owes me
23 maybe.

24 Now, I am sure most of you didn't ask to be
25 deaf. How many -- some people, hey, I am deaf, we are

1 happy we have deaf kids, but really we didn't ask to be
2 deaf, our kids neither. Did you? So you shouldn't be
3 punished with it. I didn't ask for the stigma of being
4 deaf. I didn't ask for that either, you know, I am
5 almost -- I would be like uncomfortable, I mean, like
6 alien, that's what it is like here.

7 I think five years ago, I had a heart attack.
8 I was in the hospital. Had a very skilled interpreter
9 who I am very thankful for, and no names here, but the
10 doctor cured me, great job on the doctor.

11 But he told me with my beautiful interpreter,
12 he told me that, you know, if you don't stop smoking,
13 you are going to die. You know, probably two years
14 from now, you are going to be having open heart
15 surgery, another operation, and, you know, I didn't
16 want to do that. So, you know, I thought that I was,
17 you know, I mean, he told me, you have to do this and
18 this and this, those things through the interpreter.
19 The doctor rescued me physically, yes, he did. But my
20 interpreter saved my life. Because they told me what
21 the doctor said. Now, if I didn't, you know, quote,
22 unquote, hear what they said, I would probably be dead
23 by now. So, you know, I appreciate what my interpreter
24 did.

25 Thank you, Helen.

1 LYNN SEDLACKO (Through interpreter): Hello.
2 My name is Lynn, L-y-n-n, S-e-d-l-a-c-k-o.

3 A few comments I would like to make. My
4 concern is that PA 204, I am speaking PA 204, but, you
5 know, does it really represent me? Does it really
6 represent the deaf community?

7 I was on maternity leave, I was concerned
8 about -- when I was on Admin leave, the Director of
9 DODHH, Sheryl, I am sure you, Mr. Warsaw, are making
10 sure that somebody is going to be representing us.
11 That's what I am concerned about.

12 You know, EIPA, new interpreters, those don't
13 really represent me. Karlee, she is new, so she
14 doesn't really represent me. I just want to make sure
15 that things -- that we have representation. And Amanda
16 does not represent us either. That's all I want to
17 say.

18 DIRECTOR WESAW: After Danielle we will have
19 Christopher Hunter, Renea Forrest, Madonna Newcomb,
20 Diane Antishin, Sandy Graham.

21 DANIELLE WARD: Good morning. I am Danielle
22 Ward, D-a-n-i-e-l-l-e, W-a-r-d. And I am speaking on
23 behalf of Joy Thomassen, J-o-y, T-h-o-m-a-s-s-e-n, and
24 she has her statement written and prepared.

25 As a former State of Michigan interpreter

1 coordinator, I personally saw how legislation linked
2 the capability of DODHH and protection of us Michigan
3 citizens. Of particular note is the Deaf Persons'
4 Interpreters Act, which was passed in 1982 but not
5 admitted until 2007. If the author of the first act
6 realized how long it would take to successfully
7 accomplish an amendment, the original legislation might
8 have worked different, and included more settings and
9 professional expectations for all interpreters in
10 Michigan. These safeguards would have allowed the
11 DODHH to do more and support the community in a greater
12 way. Yet looking back over the span of 25 years, many
13 changes occurred within the Michigan deaf community and
14 on a national scale that could not necessarily have
15 been predicted. For example, national testing formats
16 were altered, reliability validity standards were
17 developed in response to lawsuits, and the need for
18 interpreters grew beyond the supply available.

19 The finalized rules have the potential of
20 combining reflective wisdom gleaned from looking back
21 and inciteful knowledge by realizing that the next
22 25 years hold many opportunities. To be
23 all-encompassing, broad language sometimes covers
24 greater territory so that changes in societal norms,
25 expectations and technology can be later applied to the

1 language chosen. And here are some reflective
2 forward-thinking considerations in light of the current
3 draft rules.

4 Number one, part one. If the definitions
5 establish a deaf interpreter as a State-created
6 standard, will Michigan have another QA system on its
7 hands? From my oversight of the State testing system
8 in the past, DODHH ran into numerous issues trying to
9 find funding and staffing to keep it rigorous and
10 reliable. Unless the guarantees and safeguards are in
11 place, does this definition really serve the deaf
12 community with excellence? Hopefully there are enough
13 resources to ensure standardized testing tools.

14 Also, does Michigan want to list out every
15 possible certification that currently exists? What
16 happens when state or national testing changes? Will
17 the rules have to be amended again? Might broader
18 terms like state certification and national
19 certification endure for more years?

20 Number two, might a minimum standard for
21 working in Michigan be that someone must possess state
22 or national credentials. But only listing those
23 presently given, Michigan risks missing improvements
24 and revisions that are bound to come in the future.

25 Thank you.

1 CHRISTOPHER HUNTER (Through interpreter):

2 Hello. My name is Christopher, C-h-r-i-s-t-o-p-h-e-r,
3 H-u-n-t-e-r.

4 Many of you may remember me as the former
5 Director of DODHH for 27 years. I have heard many
6 people come up and speak about the different problems
7 that they have had with interpreters in hospitals and
8 other places, as well, and that is happening in such
9 capacity, the interpreter law back in 1982, I think it
10 was about 32 years ago, I think from that point on
11 there have been problems. So myself and Maureen
12 Wallace have worked tirelessly to work with legislators
13 about passing an amendment. And in 2007 finally, the
14 year that I retired, is when they passed a law. Prior
15 there were no rules. So now we are coming up with a
16 rule so that we can clearly define what it is that the
17 qualifications are that are required for working in
18 schools and doctors' offices, etcetera.

19 I sat on the committee for the first two
20 years to write this up for the first set of rules. And
21 we moved along. And now as I read it, I see how far it
22 has gone and how better it is now.

23 I want to tell you that the rules themselves
24 are not perfect. All of the rules within Government
25 are not perfect. And then later, as those changes and

1 things are amended, they improve. But these are some
2 good rules, and I support everything that the rules say
3 about the interpreters' levels, about their skills,
4 duties, everything is so clear. We need to pass these.

5 Secondly, I want to speak about VRI. I am a
6 supporter of VRI as an option. I think it is a
7 wonderful technology, and I used it a lot in staff
8 meetings within my office, because we didn't have an
9 interpreter available, so I would use it.

10 These rules are written clearly to protect
11 you. VRI, there must be a qualified interpreter. They
12 have to have certain things set in place or they can't
13 have it. If it is ineffective communication, then we
14 need to tell them, like the person who was up here
15 earlier that was speaking and talking about their arm
16 being twisted around. It is too bad we didn't have the
17 rules at that time. But in the future we will. So it
18 will be a fair exchange. We have the right to change.
19 So hopefully that will pass this year. We have been
20 waiting seven years past retirement for it to pass.

21 RENEA FORREST: Good morning. My name is
22 Renea Forrest, R-e-n-e-a, F-o-r-r-e-s-t, and I am the
23 Manager of Interpreter Services for Henry Ford Health
24 System in Detroit. And I know that there has been a
25 lot of growth that has needed to occur, and I just

1 wanted to let you know that we are willing to grow and
2 learn and improve.

3 I also wanted to let you know that Henry Ford
4 Health System does support the stricter rule set.

5 (Applause).

6 Henry Ford Health System has a culture of
7 quality and safety. And we know that the deaf consumer
8 is the expert here. I am not the expert in what
9 effective communication is. Only you can tell me what
10 effective communication is.

11 Henry Ford also supports the consumer's
12 choice in effective communication when it comes to live
13 interpreters or VRI. Like I said, I wouldn't expect
14 you to tell me that I understand something. I can't
15 tell you that you understand something.

16 I have heard a lot of health systems are
17 opposed to these rules. I want to put on the record
18 Henry Ford Health System is in support of these
19 stricter rules.

20 Thank you.

21 (Applause).

22 MADONNA NEWCOMB (Through interpreter):

23 Hello. My name is Madonna, M-a-d-o-n-n-a, Newcomb,
24 N-e-w-c-o-m-b.

25 I have experienced my husband was taking his

1 VRI, and we requested an interpreter. It was very
2 frustrating. They brought in a nurse, who used some
3 sign, and that certainly wasn't what we wanted, so it
4 was very frustrating. My husband was in the hospital
5 for a week. And no interpreter showed up. And after
6 we went home, I wasn't even sure what to do because the
7 doctor never explained it. So like I said, it was very
8 frustrating. And I am hoping this law will pass.

9 DIANE ANTISHIN (Through interpreter): Hello.
10 My name is Diane, D-i-a-n-e, and last name Antishin,
11 A-n-t-i-s-h-i-n. I am from Saginaw.

12 And my partner was in for some therapy. And
13 so we had written down the interpreter's phone number
14 to give them, ten days ahead of time. So we came in
15 ten days later, and we were in for the meeting. And we
16 asked where was the interpreter. And they said, we
17 didn't have one. So we were very upset, and we had to
18 leave and go home. And that is all.

19 DIRECTOR WESAW: Next up after the speaker is
20 Shirley Fritz, Roberta Newvine, Marika Blumerick,
21 again, I apologize, Natalie Grupido, and Gail Green.

22 SANDY GRAHAM (Through interpreter): Hello.
23 My name is Sandy Graham, G-r-a-h-a-m.

24 And I want to speak to you about a job
25 situation that happened about two years ago. I had

1 seen that there was an open position as a nutritional
2 instructor, at MSU Extension in Novi. So I was excited
3 and nervous, and I had requested an interpreter. But I
4 wasn't thinking about requesting a qualified
5 interpreter. I assumed they knew what to do.

6 So they brought in an interpreter, I didn't
7 know who they were, and when I showed up for the
8 interview, the day of, there were four people on the
9 panel that were interviewing me. So I was quite
10 nervous. But before I had gone into the room for this
11 interview, I was chatting with the interpreter. And it
12 was uncomfortable. I didn't know if this interpreter
13 was qualified or not.

14 So we went in for the interview. And that
15 interpreter didn't understand my finger spelling. It
16 was a big struggle. So the people around had assumed
17 that it was me when it was the interpreter. This
18 interpreter didn't seem qualified, so I was quite
19 upset. So we got through the interview, and they said,
20 we will get in touch with you in about two weeks. So I
21 thought, okay. I left.

22 And two weeks passed and I never heard a
23 thing. So I thought something was up. I e-mailed the
24 secretary and told them I had not heard anything.
25 After a month, I e-mailed them again and I still

1 haven't heard anything. So I have some growing
2 concerns. So I didn't know what to do.

3 After two months, I had gone over to VR, and
4 I told them I still had not heard anything, vocational
5 rehab. It had been about four months, and I asked them
6 if they would get in contact with the secretary and
7 find out what had happened because I was very concerned
8 about the interpreter I had and whether or not that
9 affected my job interview. So they said that they
10 would get in contact with them and that they would --
11 they got in contact with them and said they would call
12 me for a second interview.

13 At that time, I had brought in a qualified
14 interpreter. And I found out that the first
15 interpreter that was brought in was only an educational
16 interpreter, and wasn't supposed to be doing community
17 work. So once they brought in the qualified
18 interpreter, it was much better, and the boss had even
19 noticed -- the interviewer had noticed that the
20 improvement and knew that it was the interpreter, not
21 me, and I got the job.

22 SHIRLEY FRITZ (Through interpreter): Hello,
23 hello, hello. Happy to see you all here. Out
24 supporting the -- oh, I am sorry. Let me back up.
25 Forgot my name.

1 My name is S-h-i-r-l-e-y, Fritz, F-r-i-t-z.

2 This is going to be short and sweet and
3 simple. I believe that interpreters must be -- have
4 good quality for deaf people and also for deaf children
5 in the public mainstream school setting. And even the
6 teachers who teach ASL, as well. So please stand up.
7 And stand up for passing this bill.

8 Thank you.

9 ROBERTA NEWVINE (Through interpreter):

10 Hello. My name is Roberta, R-o-b-e-r-t-a,
11 N-e-w-v-i-n-e.

12 I am still talking about the VRI issue. I
13 have had to go for a lot of doctors' appointments.
14 Usually we have a live interpreter. But I am going to
15 talk about the hospitals in Saginaw, who VRI, VRI, VRI.
16 VRI saved us money in Saginaw. So I have heard that,
17 and I have heard that it is -- heard them say it is
18 about saving money.

19 Not long ago, I went in for some heart tests.
20 I went in there, they brought in the VRI, I was going
21 to see how they would work with VRI and how the test
22 would work using that. I don't know a lot about VRI.
23 I obviously -- or they didn't, they weren't trained,
24 they kind of fumbled around with it. I said, where am
25 I supposed to sit? They said, well, you are supposed

1 to sit on the bed over there. I said, okay, but the
2 VRI is over there. And they are like, no, well, it
3 doesn't work, so I stood there, you have to stand over
4 there. How can I see the VRI? No, that's where it is
5 going to stay. We have to fix it, you know, it took
6 like 15 minutes at least for them to, I don't know,
7 figure out what to do and kind of, you know, get it
8 over to where I was sitting. So I sat thinking. Oh,
9 they started with the tests, the setup, they just
10 really couldn't get it to work, they struggled for like
11 another half hour.

12 And then finally, they started the test.
13 They were standing over there. I am trying to see the
14 person who is signing, and it just -- it just did not
15 work out. Did not work out there at the hospital.

16 And the laptop itself just kind of went blank
17 and, you know, then they turned it, it would come back
18 on, everybody was all happy and, you know, it took a
19 lot of time, VRI, the laptop, it happened several
20 times. I am sorry, I just am sorry to say, it does not
21 work for everybody in a hospital setting, just sorry to
22 say.

23 MARIKA BLUMERICK: (Through interpreter):
24 Should I use it? Finger spell my name into the
25 microphone? All right.

1 My name is Marika B-l-u-m-e-r-i-c-k.

2 I support this law and the requirement for
3 the high quality of interpreters. I mean, you know,
4 sometimes we see people that work for agencies and they
5 have a name of the agency on. I think we don't need
6 that.

7 Also, at the hospital when we see
8 interpreters there, they don't seem to be under like
9 DODHH. That needs to stop.

10 I remember I gave a presentation in a
11 workshop and someone kept saying, stop, stop, stop. I
12 was a little paranoid because somebody was -- the
13 interpreter was crying. Obviously, I sign too fast and
14 they couldn't follow me. It really hit me hard, you
15 know, it looked bad, they needed to be certified.
16 Someone who could fit my communication sign. Someone
17 who can fit.

18 That's really all I want to say; thank
19 everybody for coming, and support this law.

20 NATALIE GRUPIDO (Through interpreter): This
21 is not deaf friendly.

22 Hello, I am Natalie, N-a-t-a-l-i-e,
23 G-r-u-p-i-d-o. I am a very proud deaf citizen of
24 Michigan.

25 And first of all, I want to say that, why is

1 this not so accessible to deaf people? Why is there no
2 live caption on a big screen? We have got English over
3 here. There is no -- we can't see anybody signing in
4 the background. We are supposed to be able to come up
5 and make comments. And all you can do is read the
6 English. So where do we get to see the signing? You
7 know, that's it.

8 VRI I agree that it doesn't really work. One
9 thing that we need to think about with VRI is the
10 interpreters on VRI. You know, here in Michigan, we
11 have these requirements, must have this, must have
12 this, must pass this level, must have this. VRI
13 interpreters don't have to. They don't have to. The
14 VRI interpreters could be in another state. They don't
15 have to meet the requirements that are here. They
16 don't have to register with DODHH. Does that mean that
17 all the interpreters can leave and go work for them
18 where it is easy without all the requirements? That's
19 a major concern that I have.

20 School districts that want to find a lot of
21 loopholes. Be careful, be careful. We have to require
22 them to be the highest certifying interpreters.

23 I have had enough. I am fed up. Knock it
24 off. Now is the time for change now. Should have
25 happened a long time ago.

1 What's the definition of sign language?
2 Please, it is not a sign, in the word language, you
3 know, it should be recognized just like any other
4 language. It is ASL. It is American Sign Language.
5 You know, how is it described? How do you describe
6 sign language? Please. Where it is American Sign
7 Language, it is a language, it has got this, that and
8 the other like every other language. Plain old English
9 is full of words and nouns and verbs. Yeah, we get it.
10 Put it down, American Sign Language, period.

11 I am mad. I am pissed off. You should be
12 too. The bill is already passed. The rules and regs
13 need to be done with. Stop wasting time. The
14 oppression needs to end now.

15 DIRECTOR WESAW: After Gail we will have Ron
16 and Linda Scriptor, Ron Deschler, Gary Ford, and Joel
17 McRee.

18 GAIL GREEN (Through interpreter): I am
19 speaking for my husband. And he is in heaven right
20 now. And we had experience with VRI at Genesee
21 Hospital -- Genesys Hospital. At the time, my husband
22 was bedridden and he wasn't able to see the VRI in his
23 bed. He had many, many doctors, it was very
24 distracting. Who is talking when and where on VRI? It
25 was not satisfactory. I blew up with Genesys, and they

1 realized that VRI did not work for that patient.

2 And I am speaking for my husband. I love my
3 husband. I am not speaking for everybody else. I
4 really want to have a live interpreter; not VRI,
5 period.

6 INTERPRETER: Hello. My name is Ron
7 Scriptor, S-c-r-i-p-t-e-r.

8 In 1964 and prior to, I was in public
9 schools. And I fell way behind in my education. At
10 that time, I was 14. And mentally, I was equal to a 9-
11 or 10-year old boy.

12 So I moved around to Durand schools. And
13 when I went in, the teachers told me I didn't belong
14 there. I was there for a week. And they said, you
15 don't belong. You should go to MSD. So they went over
16 and they spoke with my mother, and my mother asked me
17 and I said that would be fine. So we went.

18 I was supposed to be in 9th grade. They
19 placed me in 8th grade. I had to start 8th grade all
20 over again. Until I got into 10th grade. And then
21 finally, I understood how the education system worked.
22 I was on the honor roll from that point on, until I
23 graduated. So I am thankful to Durand for sending me
24 to MSD.

25 LINDA SCRIPTER (Through interpreter): Hello.

1 My name is Linda Scriptor, S-c-r-i-p-t-e-r. There have
2 been many, many times that I have dealt with qualified
3 interpreters. And I had gone in with a sinus issue,
4 and I had asked a doctor for an interpreter. They said
5 they have one, and I thought, well, they are supposed
6 to be here right now. And then they called me in the
7 room and I said, I need an interpreter. And they said,
8 yeah, uh-huh.

9 And next thing I know, they bring out this
10 laptop. So we go on, and it really was very
11 frustrating. Because this interpreter was very, very
12 small. It was this tiny little picture. And we kept
13 going.

14 And so the doctor was talking to the nurse.
15 And I said, well, what are they saying? But she wasn't
16 able to hear them. So the VRI interpreter couldn't
17 hear a conversation going on in the room. I wasn't
18 into that VRI. So I would ask you to support.

19 Thank you.

20 RON DESCHLER (Through interpreter): Hey,
21 everybody. I went into the hospital in -- I am sorry.
22 My name is Ron D-e-s-c-h-l-e-r.

23 I have been into the hospital quite often in
24 the last two years for my wife. She is all right, but
25 the first time we came in, we had VRI. And prior to

1 that, somebody had told me that VRI was lousy, but I
2 wanted to see for myself. And that was when I couldn't
3 speak on it.

4 So we went into the hospital and they brought
5 out the VRI. We got to the VRI, and we understood that
6 there was this situation, so they had a hard time
7 setting it all up. And then finally we had it all set
8 up, and we didn't have any trouble at all with the
9 communication.

10 Once the doctor walked out of the room, we
11 waited, and they shut the system down. And my wife had
12 said something after, I can't remember what she had
13 said, so I went over to go tell the nurse, I had
14 written down just a simple question. Hold on a minute.
15 And then the nurse had to come back in and set up the
16 whole system again. And we had to wait and wait. So
17 finally they were able to get it to work, and I asked
18 one simple question and got an answer and that was it.

19 And I thought, what a waste of time. Why
20 couldn't we just answer the question of what I wanted
21 to know?

22 Secondly -- oh, I think I lost it. That must
23 be all. Thank you.

24 JOEL MCREE. My name is Joel McRee.

25 I am hearing, so I am going to try to sign

1 this the same time that I am talking. Okay. Okay.

2 You go ahead and interpret.

3 (Through interpreter): Last Tuesday, I spent
4 the night in the hospital with kidney stones. For
5 anybody who has experienced kidney stones, you can only
6 imagine how painful that is. I can't imagine being
7 deaf and trying to communicate to a doctor or to a
8 nurse what my need was at that point.

9 The reason why I bring this up is, becoming
10 aware of PA 204, the need for the deaf community to
11 have what they deserve, which is a qualified
12 interpreter at their side during a time of need. Be it
13 medical, be it court system, or some other reason, it
14 doesn't matter, it is life. You need that interpreter.

15 The American people should be ashamed of
16 themselves for not providing interpreters for the deaf
17 community as needed. Our politicians need to step off
18 the dollar and stop putting a monetary value to this.
19 There is no monetary value. It is infinitely valuable
20 for this.

21 Thank you.

22 DIRECTOR WESAW: Looking for Gary Ford.

23 Okay. Okay. After Gary, Tami Glenn, Brett Hollerback,
24 Millie Hursin, Mary Trayner, and Hanni Adams.

25 GARY FORD (Through interpreter): Welcome.

1 My name is Gary Ford, F-o-r-d, and this is my wife,
2 Robin Ford.

3 My friend called me, and I went to visit in
4 the hospital my friend. And I asked them the room
5 number, and they told me it was upstairs. So I had
6 gone in and found the room. And there was no one there
7 to interpret at all. Staff came in and I asked, where
8 is the interpreter? So you tell them the rest.

9 ROBIN FORD: (Through interpreter): Then I
10 asked, where is the interpreter? And she said it
11 wasn't her responsibility. So I told her it was her
12 responsibility. And then she had to call the
13 interpreter because it is the law so we could
14 communicate.

15 GARY FORD (Through interpreter): So anyhow,
16 October 16th, my wife had been taken into the hospital.
17 And there was an emergency. And we weren't able to
18 explain what was going on. So I had to show them.
19 This part. And they said, okay. And they called, and
20 we waited. And an interpreter came finally. And, you
21 know, we were in the emergency room and we had to wait
22 and wait and wait and wait until we couldn't wait
23 anymore because my son was at home. So I said, please
24 take care of her. And then 4:00, she was finally taken
25 upstairs.

1 The next morning, I got up and I had taken
2 our son to school, and then I went to visit the
3 hospital. And the woman who was there in the morning
4 had a different -- there was a different interpreter
5 that was brought in. About an hour later, the
6 interpreter left. And said she would be back. So we
7 waited and waited. And I had gone out for lunch, but
8 then the interpreter never showed back up, and four,
9 five hours passed and passed, and I thought, gosh,
10 there should be interpreters here. Why aren't
11 interpreters showing up? So we waited and waited, and
12 it didn't seem right.

13 So then the next day, again, we had the same
14 problem that no interpreter showed up, so I have been
15 praying. After a while we went home, and later, I had
16 called and they had an interpreter that came in briefly
17 and that was it.

18 So thank you.

19 DIRECTOR WESAW: Looking for Tami Glenn.
20 Okay Brett Hollerback, Millie Hurson, Mary Trayner, and
21 Hanni Adams. Those are the next four up. Brett
22 Hollerback.

23 BRETT HOLLERBACK (Through interpreter): My
24 name is Brett P. Hollerback, H-o-l-l-e-r-b-a-c-k. I
25 graduated from MSD in '99. Didn't use interpreters

1 much. But I went to dentist like every six months,
2 used an interpreter. I was able to write back and
3 forth. Thank you.

4 MILLIE HURSIN (Through interpreter): Hello.
5 My name is Millie Hursin, M-i-l-l-i-e, H-u-r-s-i-n.

6 I had a bad experience in the medical
7 situation with my mother. I am not going to go into
8 that story. I already wrote the comments and sent it
9 to Lansing. It is posted on the Web.

10 But I just want to talk about specifically
11 the EIPA certification. I am signing to you, but I
12 want to speak straight to him, so I am going to ask
13 Jeff if he doesn't mind telling the sign.

14 I am an educator, over 30 years experience,
15 retired teacher and school administrator. We know the
16 State of Michigan and MBA requires teachers to have
17 higher certification. They must be highly qualified.
18 If they are not, they can't teach. We also know that
19 if teachers want to teach math, they must have an
20 endorsement to teach math. If they want to teach
21 chemistry, they must have an endorsement to teach
22 chemistry.

23 Our interpreters, on the other hand, they
24 want not to have these requirements. They want to have
25 an EIPA of 3.5. They want to have time to learn to

1 improve their skills. They want to have time to go
2 from 3.5 to a 4.0. They want time for that.

3 We don't give teachers time to get their
4 endorsement. If they don't get their endorsement, they
5 are out the door. These interpreters, they want to go
6 from a 3.5 to 4.0 over a couple years. At whose
7 expense? At our children's expense.

8 I am from Wayne County. And I know that
9 Wayne County, like all other counties in Michigan, has
10 a very low mentality. The students in Detroit, the
11 students in Dearborn, students throughout the state are
12 not given the first option to come from Michigan School
13 For the Deaf. They must rely on those interpreters who
14 do not have the skills that they need.

15 Whether we do like California does, whether
16 we do like Texas does, we can do an IEP meeting, the
17 parents' first choice is the deaf school. When that
18 choice is made, the next choice is interpreting.

19 In Michigan, we are doing it half ass
20 backwards. They don't have the choice to come to MSD.
21 Many parents are fighting to come to MSD. I think it
22 is time to pass these laws. We are not here to please
23 the interpreters. We are here for our students.

24 4.0; nothing less.

25 Thank you.

1 (Applause).

2 REBECCA SHRINER (Through interpreter):

3 Hello, my name is Rebecca Shriner, S-h-r-i-n-e-r.

4 I want to talk about the interpreter program.

5 And what that person had just said, I agree with and
6 support that.

7 Many children who are in mainstream schools,
8 the mainstream teachers tend to write on the board.
9 And the interpreters are -- what are they supposed to
10 look at? At the interpreter or the writing on the
11 board? So the kids always tend to lose one or the
12 other, you know, it becomes that much harder. So there
13 may be 20 percent given an education, where if you send
14 them to deaf school, where they have the deaf teacher
15 to educate those children, the children are going to be
16 able to pick up much more quickly and advance faster.

17 And so that's my goal. I would like to see
18 kids who have a teacher who is deaf or they have a good
19 education level.

20 As far as VRI, I had some experience with
21 that with my daughter who was brought into the
22 hospital. She was in the Children's Hospital, and they
23 brought in VRI. And the doctor had not arrived yet so
24 the VRI was not on. After two minutes, it shuts down
25 and they have to reset it again. So then another nurse

1 comes in and has to set it back up again. And they
2 struggle 15 minutes, and the doctor is grouchy about
3 it. It is not fair. Why don't we just get a live
4 interpreter. And it is all right for interpreter. It
5 is not the hearing person's right. So please support
6 this to have a live interpreter. And the education of
7 our children easier.

8 HANNI ADAMS (Through interpreter): Hello,
9 everyone. My name is Hanni, H-a-n-n-i, Adams,
10 A-d-a-m-s.

11 Let's talk about court. I asked my lawyer
12 would an interpreter be there? He said yes, there
13 would be. I told them I wanted an interpreter from
14 another agency, or I did not use the other agency, I
15 wanted to use these two interpreters because of skills
16 of the other one, you know, they don't really know a
17 lot of interpreters in the agencies that are out there,
18 so I called and somehow an error was made.

19 I got to court. Got to the courthouse, and
20 my stomach immediately went to knots because I knew
21 that person and they were an awful interpreter. Had
22 very basic skills. Their expression, body language,
23 they sound like an animal really is what they look
24 like. But anyway, it was a last minute. I am about to
25 go in the courtroom. Oh, I was very embarrassed with,

1 you know, la, la, la (indicating) like this with their
2 face, and it was very embarrassing.

3 I got through it, it took about ten minutes.
4 I got out of there. I was very embarrassed because,
5 you know, I just thought, man, I was upset with my
6 lawyer, really, when I left, you know, there was no way
7 for her to go home, the lawyer had to take her home.
8 The interpreter could not get home by themselves. The
9 lawyer had to take them home.

10 After that, I got a bill. And I thought,
11 what? \$400, to that agency. I thought, that's not my
12 responsibility.

13 So I thought it was this third agency. I
14 went to the senior citizen community place, found the
15 interpreter that was there in court, and I said, hey,
16 who sent you? And where did this bill come from?
17 Well, I found that it wasn't the agency I thought it
18 was, it was a foreign language agency. And I said,
19 well, guess what, not paying it, there you go. You
20 take the bill. And you go pay it for me. That's it.
21 Never got another bill.

22 Thank you.

23 DIRECTOR WESAW: Is there a Mary Trayner?

24 The next five -- well, I was wondering if it
25 was Mary, the sign said Mary so I wanted to make sure

1 we weren't missing anybody.

2 After Mary speaks we have Chasity Coryell,
3 Christine Kotda, Frieda Morrison, Tracy Sharpe, and
4 Theresa Mack.

5 MARY TRAYNER: I am Mary Trayner. I had VRI.
6 (Speaking into microphone but could not be heard).

7 (Through interpreter): The problem that I
8 was having with VRI, it took 20 minutes to get it set
9 up. And finally after it got set up, blurry. The
10 doctor came in, and I told him, I said, I can't see,
11 it's blurry. You know, and he heard me talk, so he
12 shut it off, figured he could communicate with me by
13 talking. But I said my husband doesn't understand me,
14 he doesn't read lips like I do, you know, I am not
15 going to talk to you, I don't understand you. He was
16 stubborn. He went ahead and kept talking to me. Some
17 things I didn't understand. I had questions, and he
18 made faces and not give me an explanation. Some of
19 things he said, I missed.

20 He wanted to read the test results, and he
21 told the nurse, hurry up, set up the VRI again, and
22 they got it back on. He said, well, the doctor is not
23 here. We are going to have to wait a few minutes, and
24 the VRI said three minutes, we have to take it off.
25 You can't turn it off, the doctor is right out there

1 reading the results. Said sorry, three minutes.

2 So then my husband is arguing, hey, I have
3 the right. It is not my fault, he had to read results
4 first. You need to not turn it on. Turn it on, turn
5 it off. The nurse finally told my husband, he was
6 arguing, trying to explain about VRI, keep it on until
7 the doctor came back. So they are arguing back and
8 forth for three minutes. It is not right. You are not
9 helping.

10 Finally the doctor came back. Luckily it was
11 still on and we were able to get the explanation, but
12 what a pain in the ass.

13 I need a real live interpreter, I am more
14 comfortable, less stress. A lot easier for mentally to
15 explain and talk back and forth, look at than to look
16 at a TV. Much easier to do it through a person.

17 I hope I explained that clear. Kind of hard
18 for me to talk silently.

19 Thank you for listening.

20 CHASITY CORYELL (Through interpreter): Can I
21 go ahead? My name is Chasity, C-h-a-s-i-t-y. Last
22 name C-o-r-y-e-l-l.

23 DeafBlind. I moved here from North Carolina.
24 And when I got to Michigan, I thought one great thing
25 that was here is Mackinac Bridge. Thought that was

1 wonderful, connecting Upper and Lower Peninsulas. I
2 thought that was great. Who's biggest Mackinac Bridge
3 admirer? That's all I wanted to say. Pay attention.

4 Anyways, I thought the inventor was great in
5 Michigan, and I talk about some Mackinac Bridge, Big
6 Mac Bridge go right from Lower Peninsula. I thought
7 that was great.

8 But when I think about who is the Big Mac
9 Bridge in my life, who is it? It is my husband. You
10 know. You know, compared to him, the bridge is
11 nothing. So my kids are not the bridge of my life.
12 They are here. So where is my -- where is the bridge
13 in my life? It is the interpreter.

14 Anyways, I support the interpreter law, and I
15 want the rules to be stricter. I don't care what the
16 interpreters think. I am thinking about me being able
17 to have effective communication, DeafBlind, hard of
18 hearing effective communication. I think that's the
19 most important.

20 And everyone should be nationally certified.
21 I want all, all to take the BEI. And I know there's
22 some national interpreters are nationally certified
23 CI/CT, have been grandfathered in, but I look at that
24 and I don't think that's right. I think, you know,
25 when I go to the doctors, when I go to school, I need

1 to remember, I am a mother, two children, I am out to
2 the doctor a lot, I go to the dentist, I go to work, I
3 go to school. And there is few nationally certified
4 interpreters.

5 What about the ER? They can't understand me.
6 They need to take it again. They are always asking me
7 to repeat over and over again. You know, then my
8 husband asks for an interpreter. It is an issue.

9 EIB, they are not required to take that test
10 every so many years. That's a complaint I have.
11 Testing needs to be ongoing. They need to have that
12 certification.

13 And I also want the hospitals, medical
14 community, doctors, should not be able to force my
15 husband or family members to interpret, forcing us to
16 use VRI.

17 Those are the three amendments I support in
18 the rules and regs. And please, I need the Big Mac
19 Bridge.

20 CHRISTINE KOTDA (Through interpreter): I am
21 not sure I am spelling my last name correctly, but
22 Christina, excuse me, Christine, K-e-t-o-l-a.

23 It is nice to see you this morning. Anyways,
24 I have gone as a foster parent for many deaf children
25 for -- since 1991 to 2006 -- '71, excuse me, to 2006.

1 Have children with emotional behaviors and other
2 issues.

3 And I often struggled, for example, with the
4 police. You know, there is too many. Something
5 happens, they call the police, 12 police show up. And
6 one interpreter. You know, makes me angry. Makes me
7 angry. Kind of makes me blow my top. You know, one
8 interpreter, we have got police all over the place
9 shouting orders, running around.

10 I struggle with one interpreter who is
11 working for two, three, four hours, you know, and they
12 should not do that. That's illegal. They should have
13 another interpreter to switch off with to keep things
14 running and keep things going until the police take
15 care of things, because they are responsible for doing
16 that, so they bring one interpreter. It is just, you
17 know, they are saying this and that, moving this person
18 over here and moving that person over there, and it is
19 like, well, you know, wait a minute, they are telling
20 me to wait a minute, doing this, doing that, I, you
21 know, I get upset, really pissed off quite regularly,
22 to be honest, because of children, you know, going
23 through that, you know, love those children and the
24 foster program, that's an issue.

25 Also, the hospital. I hurt my knee, it was

1 an awful, awful, awful pain. I get there, and, you
2 know, I want a live interpreter. They bring -- I said,
3 well, wait a minute, and they wheel the cart in, this
4 TV, and I am like, what is that? Well, just wait a
5 minute. All these people coming up to me and telling
6 me this, that and the other, further infuriating me.
7 And then struggling with TV, focusing on that and not
8 worried about my health, you know. I need medicine, I
9 need a shot, I need pain, I need something to relax,
10 and they are all over there yanking around with the
11 computer and trying to get it going. Hang on, wait
12 just a minute, and here I sit. I am in pain. I hurt.
13 I need some attention. Well, hang on a second, this is
14 important. You know.

15 I said, see you later, my husband took me
16 home. We went to another hospital. I am tired of it,
17 I am tired of VRI. You know what? If I had a heard
18 attack, would they be fixing the machine while I am
19 having a heart attack? What about the person who is
20 more important? Why would I be a box? It is all
21 right. I want to make sure that there is a live
22 interpreter all the way until I am in the ER; not the
23 box and VRI.

24 DIRECTOR WESAW: Okay. We have Frieda
25 Morrison, Tracy Sharpe, and Theresa Mack. And as soon

1 as these folks are done we will take a five-minute
2 break for the interpreters. So Frieda is up. Tracy.
3 And then Theresa.

4 FRIEDA MORRISON (Through interpreter):
5 Hello. I am Frieda Morrison, M-o-r-r-i-s-o-n.

6 Before I get started, I am really happy to
7 see everybody here. I hope we keep this type of
8 activity going beyond today.

9 But I have a lot of the same comments as many
10 of you. I am going to talk about the EIPA.

11 A few days ago, I watched some of the posts.
12 I also posted some comments.

13 I am a mother of deaf children. I am a
14 fourth generation member of a deaf family. I have been
15 to the schools, you know, we have had some of our kids,
16 grandkids at MSD.

17 You know, back in my time, it was a
18 mainstream situation. I have three sons, all deaf. I
19 did not send them to the School For the Deaf. I sent
20 them to public school, and then I found out that this
21 school really -- school definitely had the best
22 education, balance, life, so I sent them here.

23 But I still work in the mainstream setting.
24 And I saw how the interpreters interact with the
25 students, and I have seen things, I have been through

1 things, an oral program, been through self-contained
2 classroom situations. Mainstream, with no interpreter
3 at that time back then.

4 I came here to the school for high school,
5 Michigan School For the Deaf, and was able to have
6 those experiences in my last years, plus see my kids go
7 to mainstream school, then coming here to the School
8 For the Deaf.

9 I became -- I am employed here at School For
10 the Deaf. I have watched kids come in from other
11 schools all over. And I have seen what's happened. I
12 have seen how they are inspired when they come here.

13 That 4.0 does not need to be lower; it needs
14 to stay. Those kids have already lost education. They
15 have already had so much loss. And those school
16 administrators and those interpreters that are trying
17 to convince them to write these letters and send them
18 in, I mean, clearly it is because of the interpreters
19 because they didn't, you know, we are not going to be
20 here, I wouldn't have my certification, so they all
21 freak out and get scared. And it is really a false
22 fear and it is dirty. It is dirty business. Those
23 school administrators, if they would have said, hey, in
24 our school, you know, we are going to handle our
25 interpreters, make sure they are -- handle the

1 certification, control that. No. How does the school
2 administrator, with absolutely zero deaf education
3 experience, no signing ability, judge that? No. Let
4 DODHH take care of processes of certification and have
5 those children get the kind of education, stay here.
6 Education is vital.

7 Thank you. Please listen.

8 TRACY SHARPE: (Through interpreter): Okay.
9 My name is Tracy Sharpe, S-h-a-r-p-e.

10 And I want to thank all of you at DODHH. You
11 certified interpreters, I want to thank you. And I
12 would also like to thank AT&T and Henry Ford Hospital
13 in Detroit. Awesome. Every time I have been into the
14 hospital when I have been sick or something has been
15 up, it has been automatic that an interpreter shows up,
16 and no question. And they question you, well, what do
17 you need? It is just impressive. So I want to thank
18 you for that. And best of all, Henry Ford interpreters
19 show their certification on arrival. And that shows
20 respect. That is pleasing.

21 I want to talk about education in mainstream
22 schools. I have a friend who is 15 years old. And I
23 was shocked. This friend went to school with an
24 interpreter. And the interpreter was up at the front
25 signing. And that student was watching the interpreter

1 and did not understand the interpreter. The problem is
2 that interpreter was not a very skilled interpreter.
3 So I asked that 15-year-old, is the interpreter
4 certified? What's their certification? Do they have
5 VRI learning? So I went in and I decided to ask. They
6 had nothing. Not -- just a BEI I, but we didn't know
7 any further as far as what the name of this interpreter
8 was.

9 So the person had come in, they had a note
10 taker that was coming in, and they were taking notes at
11 IEP for the deaf student. And the note taker had deaf
12 parents so they knew about taking notes, and that
13 student said that.

14 I don't even understand at all. My
15 grandparents are deaf, and I am used to using sign
16 language, everybody in my family signs, and that note
17 taker took care of that student for almost two years.

18 But the problem is, is that that student was
19 also only 15 years old. They shouldn't be interpreting
20 notes for another 15-year-old. They are teens. So
21 they shouldn't be interpreting and taking notes for
22 this other student.

23 So please, I am asking you to focus in on our
24 education and force the mainstream programs, force
25 these interpreters to get certified, all of them. And

1 most of all, don't accept 3.5 or whatever certification
2 in EIPA.

3 So that's all I want to say. Keep the EI.

4 THERESA MACK (Through interpreter): Hi. My
5 name is Theresa Mack.

6 I am going to school right now to become an
7 interpreter. I marked the box on the paper not to
8 speak because I am very nervous. But this right here
9 makes me want to become an interpreter, more a
10 qualified interpreter so I can speak for deaf people
11 everywhere in hospitals, wherever they need a qualified
12 interpreter.

13 Thank you.

14 DIRECTOR WESAW: Okay, folks, it is 10:56.
15 We are going to take about a five-minute interpreter
16 stretch break. Kind of stay in place if you would. We
17 are really running great on time. I think if we can
18 keep this to five minutes, or until they signal they
19 are ready, we should be able to get everyone who has
20 signed a card the opportunity to speak.

21 So at this point before the court reporter
22 stops, we will come back at 11:01.

23 (Off the record at about 10:57 a.m.)

24 (On the record at about 11:08 a.m.)

25 DIRECTOR WESAW: Okay. Folks. Going to

1 start up again.

2 As normal, five to ten, but that's good. Got
3 a nice little break, in our Indian time when people are
4 related. Okay.

5 It is now approximately 11:08. We will
6 resume this hearing where we left off. The next
7 persons who indicated desired time on proposed rules
8 will be on for the next five: Theresa Miracle, Judy
9 Knights, Joseph Crews, Diana Campbell, and Laura
10 LaBudd.

11 And before Theresa comes up, before Theresa
12 speaks, I just want to thank you folks for staying
13 within the guidelines that we proposed. Everybody has
14 done very well, and as a result of that, based on the
15 numbers that we have that have requested to comment, we
16 should be able to get everybody on the record by 12:00.
17 Or we will go as late at 12:15 because we started at
18 9:15, actually 9:20, but again, we have to be out of
19 here by 12:30.

20 With that, Theresa.

21 THERESA MIRACLE (Through interpreter):
22 Hello. My name is Theresa Miracle, T-h-e-r-e-s-a, and
23 I just want to make sure, it is not a T-e, T-h, thank
24 you, M-i-r-a-c-l-e.

25 So I wanted to explain, I come from a long

1 line of deaf in my family. I am the sixth generation.
2 And I have deaf children, and they are the seventh
3 generation. And I have seen the changes. Way back
4 when there were no interpreters at all, I remember my
5 parents not having an interpreter. And the
6 interpreters that we did have were the hearing children
7 of deaf parents. We are called CODAs. They were
8 always the interpreters. They were very respectful.
9 Now we have interpreters, and that's been fine. But I
10 have been learning as we go, and there's been some
11 changes, as far as accessibility, but we are still not
12 finished. There is still more to go.

13 My parents are deaf. And my father had a
14 health problem. He has complications of diabetes. He
15 has CHF, congestive heart failure. It was very
16 complicated. And my dad did not understand the
17 interpreters that were used. He didn't understand his
18 diet and how he was supposed to improve his health.
19 And he ended up passing away because of it. I lost my
20 the father, too young. It was fall. But then we have
21 to move on, right, we all have to move on.

22 And just recently, my mother was taken into
23 the hospital for emergency surgery. She was in
24 terrible pain. So they had given her some pain
25 medication and they brought in a VRI interpreter.

1 Fortunately, my daughter, who is a CODA, she was in
2 there working with her, and my mom had said, hey, I am
3 pretty woozy. And they found out the interpreter had
4 said, oh, she wants more pain medication. And that was
5 not what she said. It was horrible. So that meant
6 that they were going to give her more pain medication.
7 My daughter had to stop her and say, that's not what
8 she said. She said she was woozy. There were so many
9 complications.

10 My mother and daughter can't communicate with
11 the VRI interpreter. That's not fair. How many people
12 are going to have to die before we make a change? So
13 we need to pass this. We need to have accessibility.

14 And what about the children? What about me?
15 What about them? Are we going to be underestimated and
16 insignificant citizens? So we need this to pass. This
17 is not a joke.

18 Thank you.

19 JUDY KNIGHTS (Through interpreter): My name
20 is Judy, last name is K-n-i-g-h-t-s. I am from
21 Saginaw.

22 My husband Bill, many years ago, was quite
23 ill, had to go to the doctor, found an interpreter. My
24 son happened to be home from the army and went with
25 him, and we went discussing things with the doctor. He

1 was having some severe kidney problems; wasn't sure if
2 he was going to need dialysis. There was no
3 interpreter there.

4 You know, we thought maybe he would go to
5 Detroit, get better medical care. Again, there was no
6 interpreter there. He had to write back and forth. My
7 son had to do quasi-interpreter for him. We went ahead
8 and had surgery and had an interpreter who could sign
9 somewhat, after the surgery, but he came home, back to
10 Saginaw, never had an interpreter, doctor there.

11 He got sick again, took him to the emergency.
12 And they said, you have got to go to Detroit. He is
13 like, you know, his son gave him a kidney, and it
14 seemed to be working fine, but there was some type of
15 problem. He had to be sedated. No interpreter,
16 24 hours, and was having all these complications.
17 Couldn't write back and forth, couldn't communicate,
18 just kept going all the time, every week because of the
19 surgery, he had to go, with no interpreter.

20 And then, you know, he finally woke up, he
21 was able to tell him who the president was and all that
22 good stuff. And they said because of the severity, we
23 are going to have to give you -- put you out again.

24 And then he developed an ulcer. He was
25 laying there, doctors all around, all these, you know,

1 tubes and things, he couldn't communicate. He lost a
2 lot of weight, really got thin.

3 After that he started to improve, get his
4 strength back. He was weak. He kept getting doctors'
5 appointments with interpreters. Some doctors accepted
6 interpreters; some didn't. The one doctor with
7 dialysis, he did. The other doctor, he didn't.

8 So I mean that was it. I mean, we need to
9 get interpreters.

10 DIRECTOR WESAW: Joseph? Joseph Crews? Who
11 was that Joseph? Diana Campbell, Joseph Crews, Diane
12 Campbell, and then Laura, we just need Diana.

13 JOSEPH CREWS (Through interpreter): Hi. My
14 name is Joseph Crews.

15 And the reason why I am here is because I
16 wanted to talk about the problems of VRI.

17 First of all, I was born deaf, totally deaf,
18 and grew up that way.

19 An interpreter has saved my life. For
20 25 years, I have had HIV, so I have gone in and I have
21 talked about my health needs.

22 Just recently, I went in in the fall, and I
23 was in the hospital, and there was some changes, there
24 were some changes to the law, and they didn't allow the
25 interpreter anymore. They had this VRI. I wasn't able

1 to understand the VRI. It was not effective at all.
2 It wasn't here, so it wasn't able to meet their needs.
3 So I said I wanted to have an interpreter and they
4 refused.

5 So a couple of hours later, again I had asked
6 for an interpreter, and they refused, it was a big
7 problem.

8 Also, I was having a lot of frustrations with
9 the interpreters, and I said I needed that equal
10 access, and I was also involved with Southeast Michigan
11 HIV and AIDS Commission, and I had become the first
12 deaf person that was in there. And the reason why I
13 was there is because I thought it was important for the
14 deaf community who can't speak out for their needs and
15 their health needs. And also I am involved with
16 women's breast cancer, diabetes and several others, so
17 complications of health issues.

18 So every time, you know, they go into the
19 hospital, there's ineffective communication. It is not
20 good enough to have a VRI. It is not clear. Can you
21 understand this tiny little interpreter on a screen?
22 Can that interpreter read my body language? I need to
23 have a live person there. And that helps me out a lot.

24 So I need your support, and also I need VRI
25 to be taken out and have a live interpreter for

1 accessibility.

2 Thank you.

3 DIANA CAMPBELL (Through interpreter): My
4 name is Diana Campbell, C-a-m-p-b-e-l-l. I live in
5 Oakland County.

6 And I have worked at a deaf program in
7 Oakland County for about 20 years. I agree with what
8 Millie Hursin said about the 4.0 for the EIPA. I agree
9 a hundred percent. I also respect all parents' wishes
10 to take their children to a deaf residential school, or
11 if they want to have their child in a deaf program. I
12 understand that. I understand and I respect it. And I
13 know that's the parents' wishes.

14 But currently I want to focus on where I have
15 worked for over 20 years, and that's in a DeafBlind
16 classroom and working with those students.

17 I want to talk about the teacher in the
18 education program, and I would also like to tell a
19 story.

20 There is one teacher who came in and they
21 were sharing something, and when I went to go interpret
22 with the DeafBlind student, they had said "bate." But
23 the word they used was "baking soda." And they signed
24 it like this, like in an oven. And I said, say that
25 again. Baking soda is not in an oven. It is a

1 finger-spelled term, it is baking soda. Tablespoon was
2 signed as a table and a spoon. And I said, no, you
3 need to finger spell tablespoon.

4 So I was working with one student who was
5 signing, you know, a dollar like this. And they would
6 sign 40, 50, and you could tell that they had it
7 automatic, it was ASL, it was in them. And the teacher
8 would come over and correct them and say, you need to
9 sign \$40 like this. And I said no, no, no. They know
10 it, they know how to sign 40, 50. They are great at
11 it. So I expect all teachers to certify.

12 (Applause).

13 They have nothing for these teachers or the
14 interpreters. I want that. We need that. Thank you.

15 (Applause).

16 DIRECTOR WESAW: Before Laura comes up, next
17 up is Jillian Gruetzner, Rose Bonacci, Katherine
18 Johnston, Olivia Roberts, and Charlie Christian.

19 LAURA LABUDD (Through interpreter): Hello.
20 My name is Laura Laude, L-a-u-d-e, excuse me,
21 L-a-B-u-d-d.

22 For the last two or three years, I have gone
23 in to see my eye doctor, and I have always had an
24 interpreter, for the last several years. However, on
25 the third year, when I had gone to see my eye doctor, I

1 was expecting an interpreter. And there was not one.
2 So I had gone into the office and I asked them where
3 was the interpreter, and they said, you don't need the
4 interpreter, we have a nurse here who signs.

5 Something didn't feel right. So I was called
6 back and the nurse came back, and I went into the room,
7 and the nurse knew some very basic slow signs. And
8 they said she signed like this. I know sign. So we
9 muddled through it. And they had asked my friend to
10 interpret for me. So my friend was also trying to
11 struggle through it, and it -- it wasn't right. So I
12 had said, I would prefer to have an interpreter. It is
13 important because I am diabetic, and it is really
14 important for my eyes that I need to know the health of
15 my eyes.

16 So I would like to recommend that we have
17 interpreters for people who have any health issues. We
18 know it is important, our bodies and our health.

19 I have some other experiences, as well. I
20 moved here from Minnesota. When I moved here, I had
21 gone into several doctors and I had some appointments.
22 I had gone into a room, and the doctor came in along
23 with the interpreter. And after we had gotten --
24 communication was over, the doctor left, and the
25 interpreter stayed in the room. I think it is

1 respectful for the interpreter to also leave the room.
2 I think we need to respect people's preferences and
3 leave the person alone in the room. And then as the
4 doctor comes into the room, that the interpreter also
5 enter the room. I think it is respectful for the deaf
6 community.

7 I used to live in Minnesota. I lived there
8 for 20 years. And the interpreters were excellent.
9 They were top notch, highly certified interpreters.
10 And there are many interpreters that work in medical
11 situations and court situations, and a variety.

12 When I came here, I was baffled. So I really
13 want to encourage that we support and pass this bill
14 for higher certification.

15 Thank you.

16 JILLIAN GRUETZNER (Through interpreter): My
17 name is Jillian, J-i-l-l-i-a-n, G-r-u-e-t-z-n-e-r.

18 I am going to be heading back there.

19 I want to talk about interpreters in class
20 with students. You know, parents, you know, should
21 have the right. I don't think parents should have the
22 right to say that interpreters should not be in the
23 classroom. I support that. But I also think that the
24 student should have the right to say, I don't want that
25 interpreter in my classroom.

1 I have experienced that before when I was in
2 school in high school, the interpreter came in and, you
3 know, struggled through the interpreter, eat, you know,
4 and he was doing other things while they were in my
5 class. And I thought, wow, they need to not be in my
6 class. I don't -- I don't want to have an intern
7 student in the class while I am there learning. They
8 told me, too bad. Hey, it is my class, it is my
9 education. This is what I need. So I told my mom,
10 finally my mom was in school and we were able to remove
11 the student interpreter from the classroom. Because,
12 you know, I wanted to focus on my education.

13 And also I want the EIPA, PA 204 to be at 4.0
14 and higher. You know, if it is not, the interpreter
15 should not work in the schools. They should go get up
16 to speed, pass that test and then come back and meet
17 that standard.

18 I have two other concerns that PA 204 really
19 doesn't have right now that I would like to mention.
20 Perhaps later, we will have to have another amendment
21 down the road to add it. But interpreter agencies,
22 there should be some -- a 4.0. You know, the
23 interpreter agencies, where is those who control them?
24 Where is the -- some of them, who is watching the
25 agencies? Not just the interpreters? There's some

1 dirty business going on with some of those agencies,
2 and those agencies should be regulated. There is a lot
3 of dirty business going on with agencies that is not
4 addressed.

5 And also talking about ethics, we really have
6 the EPC to follow, but really they should have the
7 ethics for standards, standard to interpreters, not
8 professional, need influence of deaf community and also
9 other interpreters that are doing the job, as well.

10 Thank you.

11 ROSE BONACCI (Through interpreter): Hello.
12 My name is Rose Bonacci, B-o-n-a-c-c-i.

13 I have many friends in the deaf community. I
14 am a CODA. I became a teacher of the deaf. I married
15 a deaf husband. I have a deaf husband. Two of my
16 three children are deaf. And just recently in the last
17 eight years, I became an interpreter of the deaf.

18 I have to say that being an interpreter is a
19 very difficult job. It is tense. You are on all the
20 time. You have to always go back and try to improve
21 your skills.

22 Being a parent, I understood what I needed
23 for my deaf children. Ninety percent of deaf children
24 are born to hearing parents. We don't have a lot of
25 hearing parents here today with deaf children because

1 they always listen to the schools. The schools are the
2 ones that give the advice to the parents. And so they
3 listen. So if the schools are saying, oh, we need to
4 keep these interpreters at a 3.5, the parents are going
5 to say, yeah, we need to keep the interpreters at 3.5.
6 Really we need to improve the quality of our
7 interpreters in the schools, so that our children can
8 grow in the education that they need so they can be
9 successful in their adult life, and need interpreters.
10 They know it as effective communication.

11 As an interpreter, I ask deaf clients, do you
12 understand me? If they say, yes, they say, no, would
13 you like me to get another interpreter? That's okay.
14 It doesn't mean I am a lousy interpreter. It means I
15 am not an effective communicator for them.

16 And so many of our deaf people here today,
17 you know, are upset about not having effective
18 communication with interpreters. And they really need
19 to stand up and say, you are not interpreting
20 effectively for me, which also goes back to the
21 agencies. I think that's one thing that does need to
22 be amended in the rules. Agencies, because we are the
23 interpreters, how do we know to get the jobs? They get
24 them through agencies.

25 I am an interpreter. I follow my code of

1 ethics. I have been asked many times to go to court.
2 I am sorry, no, I am not going to court. I don't feel
3 I have the skills. Yes, you can go, you can go, you
4 can go, you can do it. No, I am not going to court. I
5 made that decision because I am following the
6 interpreters' codes of ethics. I will follow
7 professional code of ethics. That's what we need to do
8 as interpreters.

9 Agencies have to have some responsibility
10 too. There was nothing in here about the agencies.
11 Agencies need to have consequences too.

12 Thank you.

13 KATHERINE JOHNSTON (Through interpreter):
14 Hello. Eye contact is very important to me, so if you
15 wouldn't mind. Thank you.

16 My name is Katherine Johnston. People call
17 me Katie.

18 I am sorry, I like to remain in eye contact.

19 And to be perfectly honest with you, I am
20 familiar with many of you here and many of the
21 interpreters in the room, and there are some of my
22 favorite interpreters here. Many of them are here. So
23 really, we are very fortunate you have the privilege to
24 have full access communication right now. I don't see
25 them often. Very periodically.

1 As a deaf person and Michigan citizen, I
2 always get low quality interpreters. It is
3 aggravating. And you are really lucky right now
4 because it is as natural to you as breathing. You
5 don't have to think about how to breathe. And that's
6 how sign language is for these top notch interpreters,
7 and then they can focus on my issues.

8 Excuse me. Hold on. Thank you.

9 And I see a lot of people that need to focus
10 on that, but this interpreter issue is not something
11 that you can just not focus on, and not focus on our
12 issues. You don't have the interpreter issues. We
13 have got some great interpreters sitting here. Thank
14 you. Thank you, good interpreters over here, and
15 there's many of them around here, top notch
16 interpreters. It is like music to your ears when we
17 have a top notch interpreter. It is music to my eyes.
18 And then we can focus on the other issues.

19 So please support PA 204. It is not too late
20 to make a change. Okay. We will forgive you if you
21 need to make changes.

22 Thank you. Please.

23 DIRECTOR WESAW: Okay. Next up is Shari
24 Smith. Olivia Roberts, I announced her name, but she
25 has written comments. She didn't wish to speak, so we

1 will have them read. And then after that is Rhoda
2 Nichols, Jackie McMill, and Tim Johnston.

3 SHARI SMITH (Through interpreter): S-h-a-r-i
4 Smith, and hello. Love you. Hello.

5 Mr. Wesaw, he is not paying attention.
6 That's the problem. I am here as you are. You need me
7 to give my name again? I already gave my name.

8 And there is one issue that people haven't
9 commented on is mental health. A big problem with
10 interpreters. I have worked 33 years in Oakland County
11 and Wayne County, and in the mental health arena. And
12 it has been very frustrating. VRI should not be
13 involved in a mental health situation. There is a
14 television that you are working with. They think
15 television -- they may get confused by it. We have to
16 have a live interpreter in the mental health setting.
17 There is emotions that are involved. There may be
18 DeafBlind situations that are in involved. We need to
19 have live interpreters in mental health situations at
20 all times. They may think the TV is like at home and
21 get confusion. And if we have someone that's
22 DeafBlind, of course they need to have live
23 interpreters.

24 At Henry Ford, they have been awesome,
25 hundred percent. Just like Oakland hospitals. But

1 some don't have that. So we need to have a live
2 interpreter for mental health.

3 (Applause).

4 Okay? Love you all.

5 Secondly, EIPA 4.0. We need it.

6 Okay. Thank you.

7 (Applause).

8 OLIVIA ROBERTS (Through interpreter): Hello.

9 And I am going to be signing. My name is Olivia
10 Roberts, R-o-b-e-r-t-s. And I am in support of deaf
11 rights. I used to be in mainstream school. I can
12 speak. I am experienced in it.

13 First of all, I want to thank the Director of
14 DODHH, and the committee for the PA 204. Hallelujah.
15 We need to pass this. We can worry about the
16 amendments later.

17 The interpreters need to stop complaining.
18 They need to follow the standards for all interpreter
19 rules. We have suffered for a long time.

20 And in my time, we didn't have interpreters,
21 it was awful. The mainstream school, we had to just
22 barely get by.

23 And now we have children who have
24 opportunities to have qualified interpreters, and
25 that's their right, and that's their right for a good

1 education. And it is their right to have a quality
2 future.

3 It is not right for hearing people to tell us
4 how we should learn and how we should live. That's
5 wrong.

6 Deaf people know what we need. And we want
7 to be successful like everyone else. We didn't ask to
8 be born different. And we are not different where we
9 can't live at the same standard as hearing people. So
10 we have the right to be heard, and we don't want to be
11 swept under the rug like we are insignificant.

12 So give us our needs, give the children their
13 needs, and give us the right type of interpreters. The
14 interpreters need to be at a high standard. This is
15 not a get-rich-quick scheme. This is a professional,
16 just like lawyers and nurses and doctors. It should be
17 the same standards and they should follow the same
18 standards.

19 So please pass PA 204, period.

20 RHODA NICHOLS (Through interpreter): Hello.
21 My name is Rhonda -- Rhoda. The last name is Nichols,
22 N-i-c-h-o-l-s.

23 I worked at Detroit Day School, and Detroit
24 teenagers, and the youth center school for a
25 year-and-a-half. I have been very frustrated because I

1 worked in the cafeteria, and they haven't had any
2 interpreters there. And it is not fair. So I called
3 the principal and I told him I needed an interpreter.
4 So they called in the classroom teacher to come in and
5 sit and interpret for about 15 minutes. And it wasn't
6 right. So I asked the DPS and said, I need to have an
7 interpreter brought in for the cafeteria. It is very
8 important for retirement, for health issues, for what
9 else? Health services, safety services, food services,
10 and personal issues. There is a disagreement with
11 staff, I need to have an interpreter. DPS refused to
12 allow me to have an interpreter at work. It is not
13 fair.

14 So I am in support of this Act.

15 Thank you very much.

16 JACKIE MCMALL (Through interpreter): Hi,
17 everyone. My name is Jackie, J-a-c-k-i-e, last name
18 M-c-M-a-l-l, McMall.

19 Thank you. I have had so many experiences,
20 you know, when I was young in high school, I took all
21 regular education classes. That school had a deaf
22 program. They had interpreters. But unfortunately, in
23 my day, there really wasn't anything we could do, you
24 know. I am concerned about the future of deaf
25 children. And who -- you know, deaf children that are

1 going to take regular classes, it is their right to
2 have an interpreter. Back in my time, the
3 interpreter -- I couldn't use that interpreter because
4 I was in regular ed and those regular ed classes. I
5 couldn't believe it. I went through all that with no
6 interpreter for three years of high school.

7 I asked the teacher, note taking, what do you
8 plan to teach? What is the homework going to be?
9 What's the test going to be? You know, and I had about
10 five good friends that were willing to take notes for
11 me, to write stuff down for me, but couldn't interpret.

12 I suffered through that for three years, and
13 I made it. I made it with top honors. I was able to
14 graduate.

15 But what I think about, other deaf students
16 who are in regular ed classes, they have the right to
17 have an interpreter.

18 And yes, I would like the EIPA to meet the
19 4.0 standard or above. I think that's great. They
20 have that right.

21 Secondly, four years ago, I had to go to the
22 hospital. I had a life-threatening situation befall
23 me. I had to go through an MRI. They showed me, you
24 know, this list, take your hearing aids off, take your
25 bra off, take this off. Do you have any partial teeth,

1 take off, whatever, I did all that.

2 And then they told me and I expected them to
3 bring in, you know, the VRI. That's what I expected.
4 Well, they didn't bring the VRI. And I said, well,
5 where is VRI? You know, VRI for me right now will be
6 fine before, you know, I go get in a machine in the
7 MRI. They said, no, can't, we can't bring the
8 computer. I said, look, I understand you can't bring
9 it in while I am getting the MRI, but you can explain
10 to me through VRI what's happening before I go in
11 there. And I want to know everything.

12 Well, so I had to put my hearing aids back
13 on, converse back and forth, make sure I understood
14 everything, take my hearing aids off, go get in the MRI
15 machine.

16 The patient has rights, as well. And the
17 patient has a right to have VRI or an interpreter
18 before they go get in a metal machine. They need to
19 know what they are supposed to do. That needs to be
20 there.

21 Thank you very much for listening to my
22 comments.

23 DIRECTOR WESAW: After the next speaker, we
24 have Joe Williams, John Gleason, Judy Buffey, and
25 Gwendolyn Thorpe.

1 TIM JOHNSTON (Through interpreter): Hi,
2 everyone. My name is Tim Johnston, J-o-h-n-s-t-o-n.

3 I appreciate everyone who is sharing their
4 concerns. I also support the passage of PA 204, having
5 full access. I support qualified, certified
6 interpreters, because that's what deaf people need. If
7 you listen to all the comments today, you have heard
8 that.

9 I come from a deaf family, as well. I had my
10 first interpreter when I was in seventh grade, and I
11 was lucky. I have always had interpreters most of the
12 time, you know, but I know the difference between a
13 good interpreter and a bad interpreter. Some people
14 don't know the difference, and I feel bad for them.

15 You know, certified, qualified interpreters,
16 EIPA 4.0, please keep that standard. I know an
17 interpreter that graduated from Michigan here without a
18 4, worked in a mainstream school. They have to have a
19 4.2 in Florida. They have to have a 4.2. So deaf
20 people are lucky they live there. Here in Michigan, we
21 need more good, qualified certified interpreters.

22 And to be honest with you, I went to
23 Rochester Institute of Technology. I majored in
24 computer engineering. Always had to have, you know,
25 the best interpreters for that class, and I did.

1 But there was a class that was called -- an
2 assembly language class, a program language class. And
3 the interpreter was really fast and, you know, I went
4 through the teacher, hey, could you slow down a little
5 bit because it is really hard for the interpreter. And
6 that interpreter volunteered to speak for another
7 interpreter who would be more effective working with
8 that teacher. They brought in that other one, wow, big
9 difference. You know, so it depends on the
10 interpreter's skill, it depends on their certification.
11 They need to be honest with themselves, and I
12 appreciated that interpreter being honest with
13 themselves. The rest of you certified interpreters
14 need to be honest. Don't think about, this is my
15 livelihood. Deaf education is vital. Please. You
16 know, I was lucky to have the opportunity to experience
17 that interpreter being honest, removing them self from
18 the situation. I passed that class.

19 I have a minute left. The other issue I
20 wanted to talk about is VRI. I have experienced that
21 twice. I was lucky that it went okay. I had positive
22 experiences. I think the technology is wonderful. You
23 know, but it is -- they are lucky to have VRI in an
24 emergency situation, but that option needs to be there.
25 We should not force VRI. Deaf people know what they

1 need. Older deaf people may not have experience. They
2 should have the option not to be forced to use VRI.

3 I had it in the emergency room, it went okay.
4 The second time it happened in the Social Security
5 Administration, it worked great. I mean, nowadays,
6 boom, it was there, it was nice. But please do not
7 force deaf people to use it.

8 And then last, I want to praise Henry Ford
9 for supporting equal access for the deaf. I have
10 experienced a little bit of that. I had some surgery
11 back in '92. The interpreter was not certified. I had
12 surgery the next day, they got me a certified
13 interpreter.

14 Thank you. Time went fast.

15 JOE WILLIAMS (Through interpreter): Hello,
16 everybody. My name is Joe. My last name is Williams,
17 W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s.

18 I really planned on coming to the building.
19 I used to work here at MSD.

20 And now I work in Detroit Public Schools. It
21 is a sad situation, there in Detroit, that there is not
22 access. And the main problem is, it is not the
23 interpreters themselves, but it is the teachers. The
24 teachers aren't qualified to teach. And I say -- and,
25 you know, they may have a certificate or something, but

1 when you put an oral teacher in there with a student
2 who is fluent in sign language, they are not qualified
3 to teach them. My student is 16 years old, doesn't
4 know how to spell his name, doesn't know family
5 members' names. There is a lot of things he cannot
6 communicate. Something is wrong with that.

7 And secondly, I am sick of seeing
8 interpreters going on and on and on about, my
9 certification is this, my certification is that. Who
10 fucking cares? We don't care. It is not about you.
11 It is about the deaf client and what they need.

12 So, I support PA 204. You know, it is our
13 life, that are so important for us, it is for us, it is
14 not about you, interpreter. Yay, yay, yay, you are an
15 interpreter. That's not what it is about. It is about
16 deaf people and what they need. And if you can't, you
17 know, successfully and effectively, you know,
18 communicate, then go. That's all.

19 (Applause).

20 JOHN GLEASON: Good afternoon. My honor and
21 distinct privilege to be back with you today.

22 First of all, I would like to say thank you
23 to the Director. Matt and I have been friends for
24 many, many years. I have full confidence in him. And
25 I hope you do, as well. I would like to thank the

1 Civil Rights Commission and the delegation for the
2 Michigan School For the Deaf, and also the State of
3 Michigan for finding this an important issue to talk
4 about.

5 I was the legislator who wrote the laws to
6 offer certified interpreters across the state of
7 Michigan. And obviously, my wife says this is just one
8 more thing that I could have done better.

9 I am here today to offer my voice and my
10 support and my full commitment that we can straighten
11 this issue out. I find it quite interesting that if I
12 wanted to have someone work on my automobile, that they
13 must be certified. If I wanted to go to a public
14 school, we demand that our teachers be certified. My
15 youngest brother is a doctor. My oldest brother is an
16 attorney. Neither one of them can go to work every day
17 if they didn't acquire the expertise that was needed.

18 This is a basic task going on today. One of
19 the best words ever written in the United States of
20 America: That "We hold these truths to be
21 self-evident, that all men are created equal." Let
22 them say that we didn't need special considerations,
23 that we didn't need different methods to make sure that
24 we met equality.

25 So today, I am asking you, don't leave your

1 voice and your effort here at Michigan School For the
2 Deaf. Contact your legislators, contact your
3 legislators, make sure they find out, this is
4 important, that you find this important.

5 Legislation is seldom complete, seldom. This
6 is just another step along the civil rights march. We
7 know as a nation that we let those of ours be left
8 behind. We know that only a few generations ago, that
9 we allowed women to vote. All of our laws need more
10 work. And you are here demonstrating today that this
11 one does, as well. So let's put our full faith behind
12 this.

13 I know, I know that Matt is the Director that
14 you need. And when I look at the Board and the Panel
15 that's been established for the Michigan Civil Rights
16 Commission, I know that the right people are working on
17 your behalf there, as well.

18 But whether you are with the Commission, or
19 whether you are with the Division, or whether you are
20 just a private citizen, whether you have full hearing,
21 or if you have hard of hearing issues, or if you are
22 deaf yourself, we need to work on this issue together.

23 And I apologize, I apologize. I wrote many
24 pieces of legislation, and I just took for granted that
25 we were going to treat people the way that they should

1 be treated and establish the rules after the law was
2 signed by the Governor.

3 So I want to thank you for all your
4 commitments. Let's get this passed. Let's make sure
5 Michiganders, 10 million Michiganders all have the same
6 rights.

7 (Applause).

8 Thank you very much. And God bless each and
9 every one of you.

10 JUDY BUFFEY (Through interpreter): Hello.
11 My name is Judy Buffey, B-u-f-f-e-y.

12 Some of you I have seen and I have noticed.
13 My parents are both deaf, and I am CODA. And I have
14 seen it over and over at doctors' offices, over and
15 over and over many, many times. I have got a list of
16 when I have grown up, my mom and dad would go in, and I
17 would have to interpret for them because they would
18 never bring in an interpreter. And now they have this
19 VRI. It is the same issue. My mom can't see in small
20 print because she is in her 70s and it is hard to see
21 and she is trying to figure out what this is. Or it is
22 on a tablet. This tiny little interpreter.

23 Same issue with my uncle staying over here.
24 I have taken him several times, independent, my mother
25 is so shy, and my uncle will go in, and at the end the

1 hospital will always ask me to come back in and
2 interpret for them, call me after I have dropped him
3 off and ask if I will come and interpret.

4 This is a simple thing. Keep a live person.
5 Don't use that stupid VRI.

6 GWENDOLYN THORPE (Through interpreter):
7 Thank you. Hello, everyone. I am Gwendolyn Thorpe,
8 G-w-e-n-d-o-l-y-n, T-h-o-r-p-e.

9 I am not going to go into gross detail, but
10 first of all, I come from a deaf family. I have three
11 deaf brothers. And yes, we went through a lot of
12 stuff.

13 But anyways, I would like to say five years
14 ago, I had to go to my doctor, because I noticed that I
15 had a lump on the right side. So the doctor decided to
16 take a biopsy. Had an interpreter there. After that,
17 it was done. My next appointment, I had to go back and
18 see the doctor again. And the doctor said -- the
19 interpreters, they are kind of interpreting along, and
20 just are flitting around and doing all these theatrics,
21 and I am, you know, trying to watch them and, you know,
22 after that point it was over with. The interpreter
23 said, hey, you know, the doctor said that if, you
24 know -- if it bothers you again, that you need to go
25 again. If it doesn't bother you, then you don't have

1 to. I said, really? They said, yeah. Well, that
2 bothered me.

3 I went back to the doctor. And the doctor
4 said, where you been? I said, what are you talking
5 about? I told you to follow up. Whoa, whoa, whoa,
6 whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. That's not what the
7 interpreter said. The interpreter said, no, I never
8 said that. Oh, I was upset. You know, too late for
9 me. I had to have it removed, because the interpreter
10 failed to double follow up. I was upset. But, hey,
11 God has been with me, he has been taking care of me,
12 and things have been great.

13 Let's talk about VRI. Everybody is telling
14 me about VRI. I had not seen it. So I was curious. I
15 thought I would test it myself. So what I saw -- let
16 me just tell you, the VRI is not good for deaf people.
17 Because of blurriness. The lack of clarity, the
18 struggle, you know. We are standing over here waiting
19 and pushing buttons and, you know, doctors getting mad,
20 nurses getting mad, you know, trying to get this
21 interpreter, struggle, struggle, struggle, and finally
22 it don't work. It is a waste of my time. Sitting here
23 waiting, waiting. Finally, they get it going. I sign,
24 it is not clear. It should not be a job for me to try
25 to communicate. It is not good for deaf people.

1 Last Monday, I went to the doctor because of
2 an issue I was having with my eye. The same day I
3 called, they said you need to come right now. I said,
4 well, I need an interpreter, but it was like too late.
5 Anyways, I went in, they got the VRI. There I sat,
6 there was the VRI. And when the doctor told me to go
7 back, lean back, I couldn't see the VRI. The
8 interpreter could not see me. They can't stick their
9 head out of a box and look over and see what I am
10 doing. To be honest, VRI, no, you know, it is about
11 us, and deaf people's rights. It is about our rights,
12 what we want. It is about our choice. You should not
13 have to, have to, you have to, you have to. No,
14 please. You hearing people need to respect how deaf
15 people feel and what they want and what their rights
16 are. You want us to be happy, then let us be happy.
17 Please.

18 Thank you so much.

19 DIRECTOR WESAW: I have a question for Dan.
20 Because we started at quarter after 9:00, can we go
21 until quarter after 12:00?

22 We can. Okay. We are in pretty good shape.

23 Then the next four speakers, Jodi Seres,
24 Melissa Healy, Cindy Healy, and Victor Battani. Next
25 four people.

1 JODI SERES (Through interpreter): Hello. I
2 am Jodi Seres. I am deaf. I was raised deaf. Went to
3 a residential school out of state. I grew up as a
4 happy person.

5 When I got out to the world, I decided to
6 move here. I was working in a deaf program, mainstream
7 program, which is quite different from a residential
8 school. And I worked there for 18 years. And I had
9 seen that there was improvements that needed to happen,
10 particularly with interpreters. DeafBlind people were
11 hard -- someone who is hard of hearing.

12 So, you know, the person who was facilitating
13 communication for the DeafBlind, they were not familiar
14 with sign language. And their parents wanted them, the
15 student, to learn sign and to read, both. So the
16 interpreter came in and they were interpreting until
17 there was a deaf teacher that came into the classroom.
18 They were fluent in sign language, but the interpreter
19 didn't have certification. Now that student was far
20 behind where they should have been. So that
21 interpreter needed to be certified, as well.

22 Also, I work in the schools. I have been
23 working for a while. And if I have a problem or an
24 issue within my job and I need an interpreter, I don't
25 want to use an interpreter that works for the school.

1 I want to hire an outside interpreter. They don't want
2 to do that. They want to use them. And this is my
3 life, this is private, this needs to be confidential.
4 That law needs to change.

5 We are never happy. If you want us to be
6 happy, then we need to address this issue with
7 interpreters. That would make us happy.

8 Thank you.

9 MELISSA HEALY: Hello, everybody. I want to
10 thank each and every one for being here today. It is
11 nice to see so many people that are so passionate about
12 us, and also the Commission.

13 I am a child of two deaf parents who I
14 absolutely love, and I love supporting them and being
15 there when they need, you know, when they need me to be
16 there.

17 But on the same page, I also feel as though
18 they need support when I can't be there, and that I
19 need to be a daughter.

20 And there is time and time again when we have
21 gone to medical appointments, hospital visits, and
22 things of that nature, and it has been expected that I
23 would interpret for them. When first of all, I am not
24 a certified interpret. I can sign, but I don't believe
25 that it is the doctor or the hospital's ability to

1 validate whether or not I am going to interpret or not.
2 And I, you know, should be able to do that for them.

3 I feel as though as a daughter, it is my
4 right to feel the emotions that I need to feel during
5 medical emergencies. I was forced to be an interpreter
6 for my father while he was having a stroke. And
7 instead of being able to step away and be a daughter, I
8 had to be an interpreter. And that was not fair for
9 either of my parents to not have a qualified
10 interpreter there. It wasn't right for me as a
11 daughter not to be able to have my emotions during that
12 time. The stroke was after our car accident. Well, my
13 daughter was screaming, so I had to leave her at home
14 because Genesys Hospital refused to get an interpreter
15 for my father when he needed one.

16 And I am a trained social worker. And so I
17 know -- I feel as though that I should be able to
18 advocate for my parents effectively. And even in my
19 education, I still had to fight and fight and fight and
20 fight. It was so hard.

21 So I feel bad for individuals who don't have
22 such a support system. And their rights are not stood
23 up for. And so I just feel as though this bill needs
24 to be supported in order for the deaf individuals to
25 get the treatment that they need, and for the family

1 members to be able to be a family member, and not
2 somebody that they expect me to be.

3 So thank you. My name is Melissa Healy,
4 H-e-a-l-y.

5 CINDY HEALY (Through interpreter): Hello.
6 My name is Cindy Healy.

7 And the reason why I am here is because I was
8 so happy to be part of the civil rights movement.

9 My husband was in a car accident about a year
10 ago, and he needed to have surgery. At the time, he
11 needed to be discharged, and so we were supposed to get
12 an interpreter at 8:00 in the morning to get ready for
13 discharge. We waited and waited and waited for an
14 interpreter who never even showed up.

15 So I went out and I asked the nurse, where is
16 our interpreter? And they said, oh, the interpreter is
17 here. But the interpreter is in with another deaf
18 client. Say what? Oh, she will be back, they said.
19 So I said, fine. And I waited. And we had three
20 doctors show up at that time without an interpreter.

21 So the interpreter who was downstairs with
22 another patient had to come back upstairs to work with
23 us. And I didn't like that. I felt like we needed to
24 have our own interpreter, and the other deaf patient
25 who was downstairs should have their own interpreter.

1 That way neither one of us is missing any information
2 from the doctor.

3 So I am hoping that we pass this law for each
4 patient to have their own interpreter.

5 Thank you very much.

6 VICTOR BATTANI (Through interpreter): Hello,
7 everybody. Thank you all for coming. Thank you for
8 your time. My name is Victor B-a-t-t-a-n-i.

9 I am an engineer. Currently I don't have
10 work. I used to be an engineer, so I am waiting for a
11 job interview, and I asked for an interpreter who is
12 highly qualified because there is a lot of the
13 technical terminology. The interpreter came in. And
14 they were very fluent. So I had told them -- they
15 weren't familiar with that word, it was kind of a
16 last-minute deal because I was going in for my
17 interview. And I said, you know, next time we need to
18 make sure that we have the certain certifications for
19 certain arenas, be it medical, court, whatever it is,
20 and that we need to bring in the best interpreters
21 possible.

22 There is some deaf people come in with an
23 interpreter, and I would like to see all interpreters
24 required to show their certification before they start
25 interpreting so that the deaf person is prepared and

1 they know. Because deaf people just walk in and they
2 get what they take, but if they show the certification,
3 they can make a decision.

4 All interpreters, your eyes, your ears, your
5 emotion, your mental state, you have that connection
6 with the interpreter because the interpreter is part of
7 the process. When you have a VRI interpreter, all of
8 that is missing.

9 So I am hoping that you please pass 204.

10 Thank you.

11 DIRECTOR WESAW: Okay. Our last four
12 speakers. If we had anybody else come to register,
13 they will have to come sign a statement. These are the
14 last four. They should take us to the 12:15 mark.
15 Marty Miracle, Susan Lundy, Diane Bass, and Janet
16 Jurus.

17 MARTY MIRACLE (Through interpreter): Hello,
18 everybody. Good morning. My name is Marty, M-a-r-t-y,
19 Miracle, M-i-r-a-c-l-e.

20 And I work here at MSD. I have four things
21 to say as time permits.

22 First thing I want to talk about is my
23 brother-in-law, a deaf man. My sister married him,
24 lived in Bay City, Michigan. There is, you know, one
25 hospital up there compared to here, you only have four

1 or five, but up there in Bay City, there is one
2 hospital.

3 In terms of health problems, very sick. Went
4 to the hospital, hard time breathing, really short of
5 breath. They brought the daughter. They asked the
6 daughter to interpret, who had been there several times
7 to the hospital with them, he was having a hard time
8 breathing, trying to figure out what was going on.
9 They found out it was a breathing issue. So they gave
10 him an inhaler. Said, hey, go home.

11 You know, same day, same day, more trouble,
12 breathing didn't improve. Said, hey, you know, had the
13 son, please drive me to Ann Arbor University of
14 Michigan Hospital. Bay City to Ann Arbor. You know
15 how long a drive that is. Right? I mean, that's
16 definitely more than an hour; more like two hours. So
17 the son said, okay, he got in the car, drove all the
18 way down to Ann Arbor. And he is like, hurry up, he
19 has got the window down because he can't get air, he
20 can't breathe. They pull into ER, people come out, he
21 gets out, and died right there in front of the car.

22 So let's go back. You know, get an
23 interpreter. Maybe if he had had an interpreter at the
24 initial hospital, he would still be alive.

25 I lived in Kentucky. I worked for the post

1 office. I got sick; was having some issues, having
2 some chest pains. Little tiny hospital. I live in a
3 rural town. And I thought, no. I need to go to a big
4 hospital, University of Louisville Hospital, so I went
5 there.

6 Boom, they had an interpreter right away.
7 And I heard about the, you know, interpreter, they knew
8 that I was, you know, having chest pains. And I am
9 trying not to think about what happened with my
10 brother-in-law. I went in there. They diagnosed,
11 worked on me, and decided that they were going to keep
12 me overnight.

13 Didn't need -- at nighttime, time to go to
14 bed, hey, interpreter, see you in the morning, didn't
15 need him overnight.

16 Next morning, I had the same interpreter,
17 which was great, he knew my history, he knew my
18 situation, my history. If I got another interpreter,
19 you have to explain all over again, why you are here,
20 what's happening, while they're trying to give you
21 meds, check me and do things and, you know, they were
22 going to have to put a stent in or explain to me
23 different procedures I might have to have, you know,
24 and I had some questions about that. And the
25 interpreter was able to explain them.

1 And then they said, well, the interpreter can
2 go with you to the operating room. They will scrub in.
3 Put the little hat on and go with you. I thought, wow.
4 I have never heard of that. They said, yeah, we do it
5 all the time. You know, they already had a good
6 relationship. They knew me from last night. It was
7 the same interpreter.

8 I get into the operating room, and they have
9 got me all gowned up, and they said, do not move at all
10 except your hand. So I said, okay. Interpreter came
11 in. Interpreter said, you know, 1 to 10, what's your
12 pain? Tell me. As they are working on me. So I
13 waited and waited, and, you know, I said okay, it is a
14 5 to 7, it is an 8, anxious, the interpreter explaining
15 to them, it got up to where it was a 10. I said, it is
16 a 10. The interpreter interpreted it, and then we
17 found out is when they went up in there, to put the
18 stent in, there was an air bubble. They made a
19 mistake. They had to get the air bubble before it
20 reached my heart.

21 Imagine if that was VRI and I am signing
22 one-handed over the screen. I don't know, maybe I
23 wouldn't be here either today.

24 Get rid of VRI. Much easier for me to stand
25 here with the interpreter, can look over me, we have a

1 relationship, they know my sign, they can move, we can
2 understand each other.

3 My time is done. Okay. Thank you very much.

4 SUSAN LUNDY (Through interpreter): Hello.
5 My name is Susan Lundy, L-u-n-d-y.

6 And I want to say thank you, first of all.
7 Well, back up a second. The rules and regs, who are
8 those established for? For the deaf. For the hard of
9 hearing. For the DeafBlind. I mean, really, you know,
10 it is based on them. It is not based on what hearing
11 people need. It is based on what most deafs need.

12 Sure. Rules and regs committee, you know,
13 that group of people know what's best for our
14 community. You know, it is not based on what's best
15 for the hearing community. It is based on what's best
16 for us. Many, many, many years of struggle and
17 experiences that have been baked into these rules and
18 regs, you know, and changed, enhanced, and it still
19 isn't passed. Here we are again. So now I notice a
20 few things that in the final draft last year is a
21 little different.

22 And first of all, I want to thank you two for
23 coming, for helping with the rules and regs. I know
24 you have been involved. I know you two haven't been
25 involved, so I guess thanks for being here and

1 watching.

2 I noticed last year, I said it then, I am
3 going to say it again, these categories for
4 interpreters must have qualifications, certified for
5 medical or with an endorsement for legal, yes, I stand
6 by that. I think it is great.

7 I have seen many of my clients frustrated
8 with lousy interpreters who can't sign, don't have the
9 medical experience. Not qualified. Oh, my clients
10 understand them. Sometimes I have to interpret like a
11 CDI, certified deaf interpreter, to make sure they
12 understand, but I still stand by those requirements.

13 And also I have noticed a little bit of a
14 change with these rules and regs asking the
15 interpreter -- well, I think about requesting an
16 interpreter. You know, before I think it was supposed
17 to be three days mentioned, and now it is very
18 ambiguous. I mean, does that mean that if I -- well,
19 my understanding is if I asked for an interpreter three
20 days ahead of time, or if I waited until -- by the
21 second or third day, the interpreter is not there or
22 they left or whatever, I can file a complaint. But I
23 notice that, you know, I should be able to file a
24 complaint with the agency who didn't give me an
25 interpreter ahead of time. As it stands right now, it

1 is very vague. So does that mean that if I ask you to
2 interpret at the last minute, then you don't have to
3 give me an interpreter because you can say, well, I
4 can't because you are asking me at the last minute.
5 Does that mean I have got to file a complaint against
6 the agency? Can anyone file complaints against an
7 agency for a last-minute request except in emergency
8 situation, police, ambulance, medical, something like
9 that?

10 I mean, it is important, you need an
11 interpreter at the last minute, but who says if I don't
12 ask with at least three days advanced notice, that it
13 doesn't matter? So if I ask at the last minute, they
14 will give me an interpreter, is that -- well, sorry,
15 well, fine, I will be filing complaints away. You
16 know, and I do admit that sometimes I ask for
17 interpreters at the last minute. There has been a few
18 times when I didn't get interpreters, and I know it is
19 my fault because I didn't ask ahead of time. So
20 therefore it should be in there, that three-day
21 provision, you know, two weeks, three weeks, whatever.
22 You know, so I am afraid it is vague, it is going to
23 cause some major misunderstandings, and there's going
24 to be all kinds of filings of complaints.

25 I think it needs to be put back to a

1 three-day time limit, a three-day notice that you need
2 an interpreter. That needs to be back.

3 And again, thank you.

4 DIANE BASS (Through interpreter): Hello,
5 everyone. My name is Diane Bass, B-a-s-s.

6 And I am here to talk about what happened, an
7 experience I had which you need to understand, you
8 know, to make these changes to the rules and regs.

9 I go to school. My goal is to become a
10 registered nurse, or maybe something in psychology.

11 First semester, I went to school, I requested
12 an interpreter. I requested a skilled, qualified
13 person who could interpret. I went to class and the
14 interpreter came in, and they signed ESL, English. And
15 I said, are you serious? Is that what you are giving
16 me? An English signing interpreter? I don't
17 understand that. I said, hey, I am sorry, I need a
18 different interpreter.

19 So I got a different interpreter. They were
20 not professional. They didn't follow the code of
21 ethics. They were chatting with the teacher while I am
22 sitting there.

23 And I said, okay, we need another agency, we
24 need a different interpreter. They said, well, we
25 can't, we have a contract with that agency. And I

1 said, so, we need to change the agency, get a different
2 interpreter, you know, this is my education. I am not
3 interested in failing because you are providing me the
4 wrong interpreter.

5 And they finally changed to a different
6 agency for me. And from then on, I passed with a 3.5
7 GPA. I was on the Dean's list. And I graduated. And
8 now I am at the university.

9 One thing I noticed in schools, regard to
10 interpreters, we need an amendment there for
11 interpreters to have knowledge about certain courses,
12 like science, they don't know the terminology. They
13 need to have that. They need to have the skills to
14 match the class. They need to have enough knowledge so
15 they can sign those terms for me.

16 And secondly, I am a deaf mentor for deaf
17 students who have hearing parents. Really I have to go
18 to IEP with them at the elementary school. And
19 unfortunately, those teachers and the principal who,
20 you know, are looking down on deaf people like they
21 can't, I think the teachers, the principals, they need
22 to be more respecting. They need to have
23 qualifications. They need to be able to sign, because
24 my observations with deaf children, is your signing
25 stinks, the kids do not understand you when they do.

1 No, they don't, they don't understand, you need to
2 sign. That needs to be in there.

3 They need to get CEUs, just like everybody
4 else, whether you work for the nurses or doctors, they
5 all have to have credits. I had to be certified, you
6 know, if I wanted to be an RN. If I want to be a case
7 manager, I have got to be certified, you know, that
8 should apply to teachers and interpreters, as well.
9 There is really no excuse.

10 So my point is, my suggestion is, that you
11 add those amendments, and teachers, well, they need to
12 be qualified in ASL. Better education for our
13 children, better for our clients and customers.
14 Interpreters is not just for the deaf, it is also for
15 the hearing people. How are you going to understand
16 me? You are not going to be able to understand me. I
17 need one; you need one.

18 JANET JURUS (Through interpreter): Hello.
19 Love you. Say I love you back.

20 For the record, I would like to see this on
21 the record, I support the standards, the rules for me
22 as an interpreter. Some of these are about me.

23 I want to back up. My name is Janet Juras,
24 J-u-r-u-s.

25 I support the standards and rules for myself

1 as an interpreter. I believe somebody should be
2 mentoring me. I have no problem with that. You need
3 to have a system established to watch me as an
4 interpreter.

5 You know, for those of you that are working
6 here as interpreters or any other place, there are
7 standards, a complaint system, people that watch
8 things. I think it is important. You need to know how
9 to file a complaint, you need to know that I am
10 meeting -- that I follow the ethics. I don't have a
11 problem with it; support it a hundred percent. Just
12 like teachers, social workers, RN, watch me, I don't
13 care.

14 What are interpreters for? My parents. Why
15 do I support the standards? There is a reason. I
16 mean, for me too, right? But also for my parents, who
17 have never had or haven't had qualified interpreters
18 forever. Dad was born in 1927. He didn't have an
19 interpreter.

20 I went to school, both deaf school, public
21 schools. Who interpreted teacher conferences? I did.
22 All through my growing up. He should have the right to
23 access. He is 86 years old; doesn't matter. And
24 that's why I support the standards and the rules, for
25 me as an interpreter, for you, you, you, you, you, and

1 the rest of you interpreters, you know, interpreters in
2 the state of Michigan.

3 Secondly, I would like to ask MCR to look at
4 VRI, specifically rule number 55, number 1 and number
5 7. It says that if you live in Michigan, then you must
6 follow, you know, this, this, this, very strict rules
7 for qualified interpreters. For out-of-staters, they
8 have lower standards than VRI. Lower requirements.
9 Those standards should be the same as if I was working
10 as a certified interpreter, with the endorsements, with
11 everything, you know, registering with MCR, everything,
12 it should be here, you know, 7 of the 55, that's a
13 conflict, number 1, interpreters out of the state of
14 Michigan. So please look at number 55.

15 How many days since the amendment? 2,471.

16 It is time. Thank you.

17 (Applause).

18 DIRECTOR WESAW: Okay. Almost perfect
19 timing. We started about 12:20 -- or 9:20. It is now
20 12:20. We were scheduled, we started late, I wanted to
21 go late, and I want to declare the public hearing is
22 closed. The record will remain open for comment until
23 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 7, 2014, that's this Monday,
24 for any additional written or videotaped ASL comments
25 on those rules.

1 Thank you for your patience and cooperation.
2 And most importantly, for taking the time to
3 participate in this process and sharing your
4 perspectives. Safe travels home. That's the official
5 end for the record.

6 (Proceedings concluded at 12:22 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
) SS
COUNTY OF ST. CLAIR)

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Rhonda M. Foster

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CSR 3612

Notary Public

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A			
ability 3:12 56:3 91:25	addressed 70:4	62:7 100:20,25	50:4,14 51:23
able 7:3 9:14,23 10:4 15:25 35:4 36:22 38:16 39:17 41:17 43:2 45:16 49:11 50:16 51:14 55:5 58:19 59:16 62:21 63:25 64:2 69:10 78:13 92:2,7,11,17 93:1 97:25 100:23 103:23 104:16	Admin 23:8	101:19	87:13 89:5
absolutely 56:2 91:14	administers 18:24	aids 20:4 64:11 78:24 79:12,14	apologize 8:4 17:12 29:21 85:23,23
accept 13:2,2 58:1	Administration 82:5	air 96:19 98:18 98:19	applause 4:19 13:6 28:5,21 45:1 66:12,15 75:3,7 83:19 86:7 106:17
acceptable 19:12	administrative 1:9 5:18 6:5	alien 22:6	applied 24:25
accepted 63:5	administrator 43:15 56:2	alive 96:24	apply 104:8
access 11:7 12:20,23,23 13:3 64:10 72:24 80:5 82:9,22 105:23	administrators 55:16,23	allow 63:24 77:12	appointment 87:17
accessibility 60:11 61:13 65:1	admirer 50:3	allowed 19:9 24:10 85:9	appointments 32:13 63:5 67:21 91:21
accessible 35:1	admit 101:16	allowing 18:15 18:22 19:21	appreciate 22:23 80:3
accident 92:12 93:9	admitted 24:5	all-encompassing 24:23	appreciated 81:12
accommodations 21:1	adult 71:9	altered 24:16	appropriate 19:16
accomplish 24:7	advance 45:16	Amanda 4:1 23:15	approximately 59:5
accurately 3:13 15:16	advanced 101:12	ambiguous 100:18	April 1:16 2:2 2:21 5:23 6:3 7:8 106:23
acquire 84:17	advice 9:24 71:2	ambulance 101:8	Arbor 10:17 96:13,14,18
act 5:19 6:4,5 24:4,5 77:14	Advisory 4:6,11	amended 6:4 25:17 27:1 71:22	area 9:25
activity 54:8	advocate 20:3 92:18	amendment 24:7 26:13 69:20 103:10 106:15	arena 74:11
Adams 40:24 42:21 46:8,9	affect 18:8 19:22	amendments 51:17 75:16 104:11	arenas 94:19
add 69:21 104:11	afraid 20:18 101:22	America 84:20	arguing 49:2,6,7 arm 14:17,18,19 14:21,22 15:7 15:14 27:15
additional 4:23 7:5 106:24	afternoon 15:5 15:12 16:10 83:20	American 36:4,6 36:10 40:15	army 61:24
address 6:16 18:16 91:6	agencies 11:2 34:4 46:17 69:21,23,25 70:1,2,3 71:21 71:22,24 72:9 72:10,11	amplification 20:12	Arnold 20:23
	agency 11:3,3 34:5 46:14,14 47:11,13,17,18 100:24 101:6,7 102:23,25 103:1,6	angry 52:6,7	arrival 56:19
	aggravating 73:3	animal 46:23	arrived 45:23
	ago 11:25 22:7 26:10 29:25 32:19 35:25 54:11 61:22 78:21 85:8 87:14 93:10	Ann 10:17 96:13 96:14,18	Ash 4:14
	agree 35:8 45:5 65:7,8	announce 7:24	ashamed 40:15
	ahead 29:14 40:2 48:16 49:21	announced 73:24	Asher 17:11 19:25 20:1
		answer 6:9 39:18 39:20	asked 6:23 16:3 16:18,19 29:16 31:5 37:16 38:4 39:17 41:4,7,10 46:11 57:3 64:5 67:2,9
		Antishin 23:20 29:9,10	
		anxious 98:14	
		anybody 35:3 40:5 48:1 95:12	
		anybody's 8:4	
		anymore 20:8,19 41:23 63:25	
		anyway 46:24	
		anyways 15:3	

72:1 77:6 78:7
93:15 94:11
96:5 100:19
asking 6:21 51:6
57:23 84:25
100:14 101:4
asks 51:8
ASL 7:6 32:6
36:4 66:7
104:12 106:24
ass 44:19 49:12
assembly 81:2
assistant 13:10
assumed 30:5,16
attached 14:18
attack 22:7
53:18,19
attention 50:3
53:13 74:5
attorney 84:16
AT&T 56:12
audience 13:6
author 24:5
authors 4:18
automatic 56:15
66:7
automobile 84:12
available 24:18
27:9
average 19:6,11
aware 8:15 9:25
40:10
awesome 14:10
56:13 74:24
awful 46:21 53:1
53:1,1 75:21
A-d-a-m-s 46:10
A-n-t-i-s-h-i-n
29:11
a.m 1:15 2:3
58:23,24

B

back 16:13 17:7
21:15,18 24:12
24:20 26:9
31:24 33:17
39:15 42:6,8
43:2 46:1
48:22 49:7,7
49:10,15 54:17
55:3 58:22

60:3 62:6,9,17
63:4 67:6,6
68:18 69:16
70:20 71:20
78:2 79:12,13
82:11 83:21
87:1,17 88:3
89:7,7 93:18
93:22 96:22
99:7 101:25
102:2 104:19
104:23
background 35:4
backwards 44:20
bad 8:12 16:17
27:16 34:15
43:6 69:8
80:13,14 92:21
baffled 68:12
Bailey 8:6 10:15
10:16 11:15
baked 99:17
baking 65:23,25
66:1
balance 54:22
bar 19:23
barely 75:22
based 59:14
99:10,10,11,14
99:15
basic 46:22 67:7
84:18
Basically 2:23
basics 2:5
Bass 95:15 102:4
102:5
bate 65:22
Battani 89:24
94:6
Bay 95:24 96:1
96:14
beautiful 22:11
becoming 40:9
bed 33:1 36:23
97:14
bedridden 36:22
befall 78:22
behalf 5:19
23:23 85:17
behaviors 52:1
BEI 50:21 57:6
believe 10:3

32:3 78:5
91:24 105:1
Bell 17:13
belong 37:13,15
benefit 18:10
best 4:16 9:22
15:2 54:21
56:18 80:25
84:19 94:20
99:13,14,15
better 26:22
31:18 62:5
84:8 104:12,13
beyond 24:18
54:8
big 4:19 5:11
12:22 30:16
35:2 50:5,8
51:18 64:6
74:9 81:8 97:3
biggest 50:2
bill 32:7 36:12
47:10,16,20,21
61:22 68:13
92:23
biopsy 87:16
bit 81:5 82:10
100:13
blank 33:16
bless 86:8
blew 36:25
blow 52:7
Blumerick 29:20
33:23
blurriness 88:17
blurry 48:9,11
board 10:20 45:8
45:11 85:14
bodies 67:18
body 46:22 64:22
Bonacci 66:17
70:11,12
boom 82:6 97:6
born 13:17,21
63:17 70:24
76:8 105:18
boss 31:18
bother 87:25
bothered 88:2
bothers 87:24
Boucher 4:13
bound 25:24

box 2:24 53:20
53:23 58:7
89:9
boy 37:11
Boys 18:23
bra 78:25
break 7:22,24
54:2 58:16
59:3
breast 64:16
breath 96:5
breathe 73:5
96:20
breathing 73:4
96:4,8,9,12
Brett 40:23
42:20,21,23,24
bridge 49:25
50:2,5,6,9,10
50:11,12 51:19
briefly 4:8
42:16
bring 11:9 38:9
40:9 52:16
53:2 79:3,4,7
79:8 86:18
94:20
broad 24:23
broader 25:17
brother 12:18
84:15,15
brothers 87:11
brother-in-law
95:23 97:10
brought 14:17,19
16:18 18:20
29:2 30:6
31:13,15,17
32:20 39:4
42:5 45:21,23
60:25 77:7
81:8 96:5
bubble 98:18,19
Buffey 79:24
86:10,11
building 82:18
bunch 15:3
Burdus 17:13
business 55:22
70:1,3
businesses 11:13
buttons 88:19

B-a-i-l-e-y
10:16 11:15
B-a-s-s 102:5
B-a-t-t-a-n-i
94:8
B-l-u-m-e-r-i...
34:1
B-o-n-a-c-c-i
70:12
B-u-f-f-e-y
86:11

C

cafeteria 77:1,7
California 44:15
call 6:13 8:2
20:1,17 31:11
41:12 52:5
72:16 87:2
called 2:25 5:22
38:6 41:3,19
42:16 46:18
60:7 67:5 77:2
77:4 81:1 89:3
calling 2:12
Campbell 59:9
63:11,12 65:3
65:4
cancer 64:16
capability 24:2
capacity 26:9
caption 35:2
car 92:12 93:9
96:17,21
card 2:10 6:13
8:18 58:20
cards 6:14
care 41:24 50:15
52:15 56:4
57:17 62:5
83:10 88:11
105:13
careful 35:21,21
cares 83:10
Carole 11:17
14:12,13
Carolina 49:23
cart 3:12 5:10
21:1 53:3
case 104:6
categories 100:3
cause 101:23

CDI 100:11
center 76:24
certain 27:12
94:18,19
103:11
certainly 29:3
certificate
82:25 108:1
certification
10:23 11:5
16:25 18:23
19:18 25:15,18
25:19 43:11,17
51:12 55:20
56:1,4,19 57:4
58:1 68:14
81:10 83:9,9
90:19 94:24
95:2
certifications
18:13 19:4
94:18
certified 9:13
10:22 16:20
34:15 50:20,22
51:3 56:11
57:4,25 68:9
80:5,15,21
81:13 82:11,12
84:6,13,14
90:21 91:24
100:4,11 104:5
104:7 106:10
certify 66:11
108:7
certifying 35:22
CEUs 104:3
Chair 4:11
change 8:23
27:18 35:24
61:12 73:20
91:4 100:14
103:1
changed 99:18
103:5
changes 7:11
24:13,24 25:16
26:25 60:3,11
63:23,24 73:21
102:8
Charlie 66:18
Chasity 48:2

49:20,21
chatting 30:11
102:21
cheaper 11:4
check 16:24
97:21
chemistry 43:21
43:22
chest 97:2,8
CHF 60:15
child 19:13
65:11 91:13
children 12:14
12:18,21,21
13:3,3,4 15:5
15:6 18:3,11
19:15,22 32:4
45:7,15,15
46:7 51:1,24
52:1,22,23
54:13 56:5
60:2,6 61:14
65:10 70:16,23
70:23,25 71:7
75:23 76:12
77:25,25
103:24 104:13
children's 44:7
45:22
child's 18:17,19
choice 28:12
44:17,18,18,20
89:12
choose 10:10
chosen 25:1
Chris 4:17
Christian 66:18
Christina 51:22
Christine 4:1,8
48:3 51:20,22
Christopher
23:19 26:1,2
Cindy 89:24 93:5
93:6
circulation 6:1
citizen 34:23
47:14 73:1
85:20
citizens 24:3
61:16
City 95:24 96:1
96:14

civil 1:1 5:14
5:20 12:22
20:9 84:1 85:6
85:15 93:8
CI/CT 50:23
CLAIR 108:5
clarity 88:17
class 68:19 69:5
69:6,7,8 80:25
81:1,2,2,18
102:13 103:14
classes 77:21
78:1,4,16
classroom 55:2
65:16 68:23,25
69:11 77:4
90:17
clear 27:4 49:17
64:20 88:24
clearly 26:16
27:10 55:18
client 83:11
93:18
clients 71:11
100:7,9 104:13
close 3:15 7:9
closed 106:22
closer 2:13
CODA 61:1 70:14
86:13
CODAs 60:7
code 71:25 72:7
102:20
codes 72:6
Colombo 8:5,10
combining 24:20
come 3:5,9 6:15
10:3 13:24
14:8 25:24
26:6 33:17
35:4 39:15
44:12,20,21
47:16 55:10,12
57:9 58:22
59:25 66:8
69:16 77:4
80:9 87:1,3,10
89:3 93:22
94:22 95:12,13
96:20
comes 28:12 46:1
59:11 66:16

68:4
comfortable
 49:14
coming 11:16
 12:4 17:14
 26:15 34:19
 53:5 55:7
 57:10 82:18
 94:7 99:23
Commencing 1:15
comment 1:8 2:20
 3:5 6:14 7:10
 7:21 12:3
 59:15 106:22
commented 74:9
comments 2:21, 25
 3:3, 9 5:4, 6
 6:10 7:5, 11
 23:3 35:5 43:8
 54:9, 12 73:25
 79:22 80:7
 106:24
Commission 64:11
 84:1 85:16, 18
 91:12 108:20
commitment 84:10
commitments 86:4
committed 7:20
committee 3:25
 26:19 75:14
 99:12
communicate 40:7
 41:14 48:12
 61:10 62:17
 63:1 83:6, 18
 88:25
communication
 9:15 11:6
 16:14, 16 27:13
 28:9, 10, 12
 34:16 39:9
 50:17, 18 64:19
 67:24 71:10, 18
 72:24 90:13
communicator
 71:15
community 4:22
 14:5 19:14
 23:6 24:11, 13
 25:12 31:16
 40:10, 17 47:14
 51:14 64:14

68:6 70:8, 13
 99:14, 15
compared 50:10
 95:25
complained 16:22
complaining
 12:25 75:17
complaint 51:10
 100:22, 24
 101:5 105:7, 9
complaints 101:6
 101:15, 24
complete 85:5
 108:12
complicated
 60:16
complications
 60:14 61:9
 62:16 64:17
computer 53:11
 79:8 80:24
 108:11
concern 20:4
 21:6 23:4
 35:19
concerned 23:7
 23:11 31:7
 77:24
concerns 18:16
 31:2 69:18
 80:4
concluded 107:6
conducted 5:19
 6:3, 9
conference 12:1
 13:10
conferences
 105:21
confidence 83:24
confidential
 91:3
conflict 106:13
confused 74:15
confusion 74:21
congestive 60:15
Congressman 12:1
connecting 50:1
connection 95:5
consequences
 72:11
consider 7:10
 19:12

considerations
 25:2 84:22
consumer 28:7
consumer's 28:11
contact 31:6, 10
 31:11 72:14, 18
 85:2, 2
continue 13:5
contract 11:2
 102:25
contributions
 5:3
control 12:12
 56:1 69:23
conversation
 38:17
converse 79:13
convince 55:17
cooperation
 107:1
coordinator 24:1
corner 2:10
correct 66:8
 108:12
correctly 51:21
corresponds 2:24
Coryell 48:2
 49:20
Council 4:6, 11
 19:15
counties 44:9
counting 13:8
County 44:8, 9
 65:5, 7 74:10
 74:11 108:5
couple 44:6 64:5
course 74:22
courses 103:11
court 1:13 3:11
 5:11 10:2
 16:17 40:13
 46:11, 19 47:15
 58:21 68:11
 72:1, 2, 4 94:19
courthouse 46:19
courtroom 46:25
courts 10:1
 20:25
Court's 17:1
cover 2:7, 18
covers 24:23
created 84:21

credentials
 25:22
credits 104:5
Crews 59:9 63:10
 63:11, 13, 14
crying 34:13
CSR 108:18
CSR-3612 1:17
cuffed 10:6
culture 28:6
cured 22:10
curious 88:14
current 4:3 7:19
 25:2
currently 25:15
 65:14 94:9
customers 104:13
C-a-m-p-b-e-l-l
 65:4
C-a-r-o-l-e
 14:13
C-h-a-s-i-t-y
 49:21
C-h-r-i-s-t-o...
 26:2
C-o-l-o-m-b-o
 8:11
C-o-r-y-e-l-l
 49:22
C-section 16:12

D

dad 60:16 86:16
 105:18
Dan 3:24 4:9
 89:19
Danielle 17:14
 23:18, 21, 21
data 19:5
date 7:17
daughter 10:1, 8
 45:21 61:1, 7
 61:10 91:19
 92:3, 7, 11, 13
 96:5, 6
day 2:21 30:8
 42:13 76:23
 77:23 82:12
 84:16 89:2
 96:11, 11
 100:21
days 10:9 11:25

29:14,15 54:11	50:17 65:15,22	76:23 82:20,21	61:25
100:17,20	74:18,22 90:10	developed 18:24	discussion 18:2
101:12 106:15	90:13 99:9	24:17 62:24	distinct 18:25
dead 22:22	deafs 99:11	developing 4:2	83:21
deaf 1:2,12 5:12	deal 94:16	diabetes 60:14	distracting
5:18,20,24 9:7	dealt 38:2	64:16	36:24
9:15 10:1,2,8	Dean's 103:7	diabetic 67:13	districts 35:20
10:13 11:21	Dearborn 44:11	diagnosed 97:10	Division 1:2
12:6,18,21	Debby 8:5,22,25	dialysis 62:2	3:25 5:20
13:3,12,17,21	9:1	63:7	85:19
14:9,9 15:19	decide 17:1	Diana 59:9 63:11	doctor 11:6
18:6 20:7,10	decided 57:5	63:12 65:3,4	22:10,10,19,21
20:17,19,25	87:15 90:5	Diane 23:20 29:9	29:7 38:4,14
21:15,21,22,25	97:11	29:10 63:11	39:10 40:7
21:25 22:1,2,4	decision 72:5	95:15 102:4,5	45:23 46:2
23:6 24:3,13	95:3	Dianna 4:13	48:10,22,25
25:5,11 28:7	declare 106:21	die 22:13 61:12	49:7,10 51:2
32:4,4 34:21	define 26:16	died 96:21	61:23,25 62:10
34:23 35:1	definitely 54:21	diet 60:18	63:6,7 66:23
40:7,10,16	96:16	Dietch 8:5,25	66:25 67:22,24
44:13,17 45:14	definition 20:6	9:1	68:4 84:15
45:14,18 51:24	20:8,19,20,21	difference 80:12	87:14,15,18,18
54:13,14,18,19	25:11 36:1	80:14 81:9	87:23 88:3,3
55:5,8,10 56:2	definitions 25:4	different 2:12	89:1,6 91:25
57:11,11,15	delegation 84:1	19:1 24:8 26:6	94:2
58:10 60:1,2,7	Dellmus 12:2	42:4,4 76:8,8	doctors 8:14,15
60:13 63:17,17	demand 84:14	84:23 90:7	8:19 9:4 21:15
64:12,14 65:6	DeMann 20:23	97:23 99:21	26:18 32:13
65:10,11 68:5	demonstrating	102:18,19,24	36:23 50:25
70:8,13,14,15	85:10	103:1,5	51:14 62:25
70:15,16,17,23	dentist 43:1	difficult 9:6	63:4,5 67:21
70:23,25 71:11	51:2	70:19	76:16 86:14
71:16 73:1	Department 1:1	Director 2:4	88:19 93:20
75:10 76:6	4:23 5:14,20	4:25 5:13 8:22	104:4
77:21,24,25	7:8,10	11:16 17:9	document 4:21
78:15 80:6,9	depend 18:3	23:8,18 26:5	DODHH 23:9 24:2
80:19 81:15,25	depends 81:9,10	29:19 36:15	24:11 25:8
82:1,7,9 83:11	Deputy 4:25	40:22 42:19	26:5 34:9
83:16 84:2	Deschler 36:16	47:23 53:24	35:16 56:4,10
85:2,22 86:13	38:20	58:14,25 63:10	75:14
87:10,11 88:16	describe 36:5	66:16 73:23	DOHH 20:9
88:25 89:11,14	described 36:5	75:13 79:23	doing 31:16
90:2,2,6,17	deserve 40:11	83:23 85:13	44:19 52:15,20
91:13 92:24	desire 6:12	89:19 95:11	52:20 69:4
93:17,24 94:22	desired 59:7	106:18	70:9 87:20
94:25 95:1,23	desk 7:7	dirty 55:22,22	89:10
99:8 100:11	detail 87:9	70:1,3	dollar 40:18
103:16,16,20	determine 7:11	disagreement	66:5
103:24 104:14	9:6	77:10	door 44:5
105:20	Detroit 27:24	discharge 93:13	double 88:10
DeafBlind 11:7	44:10 56:13	discharged 93:11	downstairs 93:21
20:21 49:23	62:5,12 76:23	discussing 17:21	93:25

DPS 77:6, 11
draft 4:3 25:3
 99:20
drafting 4:21
drive 96:13, 15
driving 12:5
dropped 87:2
drove 96:17
due 6:20 9:24
 13:6
Durand 37:12, 23
duties 27:4
D-a-n-i-e-l-l-e
 23:22
D-e-b-b-y 9:1
D-e-l-l-m-u-s
 12:2
D-e-s-c-h-l-e-r
 38:22
D-i-a-n-e 29:10
D-i-e-t-c-h 9:1

E

e 14:13
ear 9:3 21:20
earlier 27:15
ears 73:16 95:4
easier 46:7
 49:14, 16 98:24
easy 35:18
eat 69:3
ed 78:4, 4, 16
editing 7:14
educate 45:15
educated 10:13
education 12:16
 18:4, 5, 9, 11, 17
 18:19 19:17
 37:9, 21 45:13
 45:19 46:6
 54:22 55:14
 56:2, 5, 6, 21
 57:24 65:18
 69:9, 12 71:8
 76:1 77:21
 81:15 92:19
 103:2 104:12
educational
 11:23 17:23
 18:15 19:2, 14
 19:18 31:15
educator 43:14

effective 7:16
 9:15 28:9, 10
 28:12 50:17, 18
 64:1 71:10, 15
 71:17 81:7
effectively
 71:20 83:17
 92:18
effort 85:1
efforts 3:22 4:2
 5:9
EI 58:3
EIB 51:9
eight 70:17
EIPA 11:23 12:24
 18:16 19:6
 23:12 43:11, 25
 54:10 58:2
 65:8 69:13
 75:5 78:18
 80:16
either 5:4 18:23
 22:4 23:16
 92:9 98:23
elementary 18:22
 18:25 19:4
 103:18
embarrassed
 46:25 47:4
embarrassing
 47:2
emergencies 92:5
emergency 11:1
 14:16 41:17, 21
 60:23 62:11
 81:24 82:3
 101:7
Emery 3:23
emotion 95:5
emotional 17:19
 52:1
emotions 74:17
 92:4, 11
employed 17:25
 55:9
encourage 68:13
encouraging 14:6
ended 60:19
endorsement
 43:20, 21 44:4
 44:4 100:5
endorsements

106:10
endure 25:19
engineer 94:9, 10
engineering
 80:24
English 17:18
 35:2, 6 36:8
 102:14, 16
enhanced 99:18
ensure 25:13
enter 68:5
entered 5:4
entire 18:2
EPC 70:6
equal 12:20, 23
 13:3 37:10
 64:9 82:9
 84:21
equality 84:24
equitable 18:11
ER 51:5 53:22
 96:20
error 46:18
ESL 102:14
establish 25:5
 86:1
established
 85:15 99:8
 105:3
etcetera 26:18
ethics 70:5, 7
 72:1, 6, 7
 102:21 105:10
everybody 7:3
 33:18, 21 34:19
 37:3 38:21
 54:7 57:16
 59:13, 16 82:16
 88:13 91:9
 94:7 95:18
 104:3
Everybody's 14:1
exactly 14:25
example 10:25
 24:15 52:3
excellence 25:12
excellent 10:21
 68:8
exchange 27:18
excited 30:2
excuse 51:22, 25
 66:20 73:8

104:9
excused 17:3
exists 25:15
expect 7:17
 28:13 66:11
 93:2
expectations
 24:9, 25
expected 79:2, 3
 91:22
expecting 67:1
expense 44:7, 7
experience 8:12
 10:19 14:15
 16:17 36:20
 43:6, 14 45:20
 56:3 81:16
 82:1 100:9
 102:7
experienced
 10:25 28:25
 40:5 69:1
 75:12 81:20
 82:10
experiences 12:9
 13:18 55:6
 67:19 77:19
 81:22 99:17
expert 28:8, 8
expertise 84:17
Expires 108:20
explain 41:18
 49:6, 15 59:25
 79:9 97:19, 22
 97:25
explained 29:7
 49:17
explaining 98:14
explanation
 48:18 49:11
expression 46:22
Extension 30:2
eye 66:23, 25
 72:14, 18 89:2
eyes 67:14, 15
 73:17 95:4
e-mailed 30:23
 30:25

F

face 47:2
faces 48:18

facilitating 6:7 90:12	finally 15:12,12 15:16 16:8,15	90:18 94:14	25:2
failed 88:10	16:16 26:13	focus 3:3 57:23	foster 1:17
failing 103:3	33:12 37:21	65:14 69:12	51:24 52:24
failure 19:21 60:15	39:7,17 41:20	73:7,9,11,11	108:17
fair 19:16 27:18 46:3 61:11 77:2,13 92:8	41:24 48:9	73:18	fought 15:10
faith 85:11	49:5,10 62:20	focusing 53:7	found 16:20
fall 60:20 63:22	69:10 88:21,23	folks 5:15 7:20	31:14 41:6
false 55:21	103:5	8:8 54:1 58:14	47:14,17 54:20
familiar 72:20 90:13 94:15	find 20:7,19,20 20:21 25:9	58:25 59:12	61:3,23 96:9
family 4:24 51:15 54:14 57:16 60:1 80:9 83:4 87:10 92:25 93:1	31:7 35:20	follow 8:20	98:17
far 2:15 26:21 45:20 57:7 60:11 90:19	84:11 85:3,4	34:14 70:6	four 8:3,7 10:9
fast 7:23 34:13 81:3 82:14	finding 4:16 84:3	71:25 72:6	30:8 31:5 42:8
faster 45:16	fine 12:17 37:17 60:9 62:14	75:18 76:17	42:21 52:11
father 60:13,20 92:6,15	79:6 93:19	88:5,10 102:20	78:21 89:23,25
fault 49:3 101:19	101:15	105:10 106:6	95:11,14,20,25
favorite 72:22	finger 20:15 30:15 33:24 66:3	following 1:9 72:5	fourth 54:14
fear 55:22	finger-spelled 66:1	food 77:9	Franklyn 4:14
fed 35:23	finished 60:12	force 11:13 51:14 57:24,24 81:25 82:7	freak 55:21
feel 67:5 72:2 80:14 89:15 91:17 92:3,4,4 92:17,21,23	first 3:21,23 8:2 19:15 24:5 26:19,20 31:14 34:25 38:25 44:12,17 49:4 63:17 64:11 75:13 80:10 83:22 87:10 91:23 95:22 99:6,22 102:11	forced 82:2 92:5	Frieda 4:14 48:3 53:24 54:2,4,5
fell 37:9	fit 34:16,17	forcing 51:15	friend 9:22 41:3 41:4 56:22,23 67:9,10
felt 18:1 93:23	five 8:7 22:7 42:9 47:24 58:18 59:2,8 78:10 87:13 96:1	Ford 27:23 28:3 28:6,11,18 36:16 40:22,25 41:1,2,9,15 56:12,18 74:24 82:8	friendly 34:21
fight 92:19,19 92:19,20	five-minute 54:1 58:15	28:6,11,18	friends 20:1 70:13 78:10 83:23
fighting 44:21	fix 33:5	41:1,2,9,15	Fritz 4:25 29:20 31:22 32:1
figure 33:7 86:21 96:8	fixing 53:18	56:12,18 74:24	front 56:24 96:21
figured 48:12	flexibility 18:22	82:8	frustrated 8:14 76:25 100:7
file 100:22,23 101:5,6 105:9	Flint 1:14 2:1 5:24	foregoing 108:8	frustrating 29:2 29:4,8 38:11 74:12
filing 101:15	flitting 87:20	foreign 47:18	frustrations 64:8
filings 101:24	Florida 80:19	forever 105:18	fucking 83:10
final 7:13,14 99:20	fluent 83:2	forget 14:13 15:25 16:11	full 2:16 36:9 72:24 80:5 83:24 84:10 85:11,20 108:12
finalized 24:19		forgive 73:20	fumbled 32:24
		forgot 15:25 31:25	function 2:17
		forgotten 21:7	funding 25:9
		format 6:9	further 53:6 57:7
		formats 24:15	future 25:24 27:17 76:2 77:24
		former 23:25 26:4	
		Forrest 23:19 27:21,22	
		forth 16:13 43:3 49:8,15 62:6 62:17 79:13 108:10	
		fortunate 72:23	
		Fortunately 61:1	
		forward 6:15	
		forward-thinking	

F-o-r-d 41:1
F-o-r-r-e-s-t
 27:22
F-r-i-t-z 32:1

G

Gail 29:21 36:15
 36:18
gain 12:12
Gary 36:16 40:22
 40:23,25 41:1
 41:15
general 1:10,10
 6:1
generation 54:14
 60:1,3
generations 85:8
Genesee 36:20
Genesys 36:21,25
 92:14
getting 2:6 3:18
 5:15 17:6,6
 63:4 79:9
 88:19,20
get-rich-quick
 76:15
Gina 8:4,10,11
give 3:8 29:14
 44:3 48:18
 61:6 62:23
 71:2 74:7
 76:12,12,13
 97:20 100:24
 101:3,14
given 25:23
 44:12 45:13
 60:24
giving 102:15
glad 12:6
gleaned 24:20
Gleason 79:24
 83:20
Glenn 40:23
 42:19
go 3:22 5:1 7:23
 13:24,24 14:2
 14:6,6 29:18
 32:13 35:17
 37:15 38:10
 39:13 40:2
 43:7 44:1,5
 46:25 47:7,19

47:20 49:21
 50:6,25,25
 51:2,2,3 55:6
 59:17 60:10,12
 61:23 62:4,12
 62:19 64:18
 65:21 69:15
 70:20 72:1,3,3
 72:4 78:21,23
 79:6,10,14,18
 83:18 84:13,16
 86:16,25 87:9
 87:14,17,24
 89:6,20 96:10
 96:22 97:3,13
 98:2,3 102:9
 103:17 106:21
goal 45:17 102:9
God 86:8 88:11
goes 71:20
going 2:5,16
 4:12 8:2 12:12
 13:2,7,25
 17:16,17,19
 21:12 22:13,14
 23:10 32:2,14
 32:20 33:5
 38:13,17 39:25
 41:18 43:7,12
 45:15 48:15,23
 52:14,22 53:11
 54:8,10 55:19
 55:24 58:6,15
 58:25 61:6,12
 61:15 62:2,18
 62:23 68:18
 70:1,3 71:4
 72:2,4 75:9
 78:1,8,9 83:8
 84:18 85:25
 87:9 88:23
 92:1 94:16
 96:8 97:11,22
 100:3 101:22
 101:23 104:15
 104:16
Gonzales 6:23
good 2:4 9:12
 11:19 12:19
 16:14 17:16,17
 23:21 27:2,21
 32:4 45:18

59:2 62:22
 64:20 73:14
 75:25 78:10
 80:13,21 83:20
 88:16,25 89:22
 95:18 98:5
gosh 42:9
gotten 67:23
governing 17:22
Government 26:24
Governor 86:2
gowned 98:9
GPA 103:7
grace 18:15
grade 37:18,19
 37:19,20 80:10
graduate 78:14
graduated 37:23
 42:25 80:17
 103:7
Graham 23:20
 29:22,23
grandfathered
 50:23
grandkids 54:16
grandparents
 57:15
granted 85:24
great 9:18 10:21
 11:7 13:22
 22:10 49:24
 50:2,4,7 58:17
 66:10 73:13
 78:19 82:5
 88:12 97:17
 100:6
greater 24:11,24
Green 29:21
 36:18
grew 24:18 63:18
 90:3
gross 87:9
grouchy 46:2
group 99:13
grow 28:1 71:8
growing 31:1
 105:22
grown 86:16
growth 27:25
Gruetzner 66:17
 68:16
Grupido 29:21

34:20
guaranteed 18:11
guarantees 25:10
guess 47:19
 99:25
guidelines 59:13
Gwendolyn 79:25
 87:6,7
G-i-n-a 8:11
G-r-a-h-a-m
 29:23
G-r-u-e-t-z-n...
 68:17
G-r-u-p-i-d-o
 34:23
G-w-e-n-d-o-l...
 87:8

H

half 33:11 44:19
Hallelujah 75:14
hand 5:8 6:24
 14:1,9 15:9
 43:23 98:10
handle 55:24,25
hands 13:25,25
 14:9 25:7
hang 53:11,13
Hanni 40:24
 42:21 46:8,9
happen 12:13
 21:2 90:9
happened 29:25
 31:7 33:19
 35:25 55:11
 61:24 82:4
 97:9 102:6
happening 26:8
 79:10 97:20
happens 25:16
 52:5
happy 22:1 31:23
 33:18 54:6
 89:16,16 90:4
 91:5,6,7 93:8
hard 1:2 5:20
 15:8 20:3,16
 20:23 21:3,6
 34:14 39:6
 49:17 50:17
 81:5 85:21
 86:20 90:11,11

92:20 96:4,7
99:8
harder 45:12
hat 98:3
head 89:9
heading 68:18
health 27:23
28:4,6,16,18
53:8 60:14,18
63:21 64:15,17
67:14,17,18
74:9,11,13,16
74:19 75:2
77:8,9 96:3
Healy 89:24,24
91:9 93:3,5,6
hear 10:6,6
13:11 22:22
38:16,17
heard 20:20 22:7
26:5 28:16
30:22,24 31:1
31:4 32:16,17
32:17 48:6,11
53:17 76:10
80:7 97:7 98:4
hearing 1:2,8
4:5 5:17,19,21
5:22,25 6:3,7
6:8,19 7:9 9:2
9:4,7 12:11,12
14:11 20:3,4
20:11,11,17,20
20:24 21:3,6
39:25 46:5
50:18 59:6
60:6 70:24,25
76:3,9 78:24
79:12,14 85:20
85:21 89:14
90:11 99:9,10
99:15 103:17
104:15 106:21
heart 18:2 22:14
32:19 53:19
60:15 98:20
hearts 4:20
heaven 36:19
Helen 4:13 22:25
hello 8:10,25
9:18 14:12
23:1 26:2

28:23 29:9,22
31:22,23,23
32:10 34:22
37:6,25 43:4
45:3 46:8 54:5
59:22 66:19
70:11 72:14
74:4,4 75:8
76:20 82:15
86:10 87:7
90:1 91:9 93:5
94:6 95:17
99:4 102:4
104:18
help 4:21
helpful 2:15
helping 5:8 49:9
99:23
helps 64:23
Henry 27:23 28:3
28:6,11,18
56:12,18 74:24
82:8
hereinbefore
108:9
hey 21:25 38:20
47:15 49:2
55:23 61:2
69:8 81:4
87:23 88:10
96:10,12 97:14
102:17
Hi 58:4 63:13
77:16 80:1
high 19:23,24
34:3 55:4 69:2
76:14 77:20
78:6
higher 43:17
68:14 69:14
highest 35:22
highly 43:17
68:9 94:12
Hill 4:1
hire 91:1
history 97:17,18
hit 34:14
HIV 63:20 64:11
hold 18:19 21:13
24:22 39:14
73:8 84:20
Hollerback 40:23

42:20,22,23,24
home 29:6,18
41:23 42:15
47:7,7,8,9
53:16 61:24
62:9 74:20
92:13 96:10
107:4
homework 78:8
honest 52:22
72:19 80:22
81:11,12,14,17
89:10
honor 37:22
83:20
honors 78:13
hope 49:17 54:7
83:25
hopefully 25:12
27:19
hoping 8:16
13:12 29:8
94:3 95:9
horrible 61:5
hospital 8:13
11:1,2,5 14:16
15:20,24 16:13
22:8 29:4
33:15,21 34:7
36:21,21 38:21
38:23 39:4
40:4 41:4,16
42:3 45:22,22
52:25 53:16
56:12,14 60:23
63:23 64:19
78:22 87:1
91:21 92:14
95:25 96:2,4,7
96:14,24 97:2
97:4,4
hospitals 26:7
32:15 51:13
58:11 74:25
hospital's 91:25
hosting 5:12
hour 33:11 42:5
96:16
hours 42:9 52:11
62:16 64:5
96:16
Howell 10:12

hundred 65:9
74:25 105:11
Hunter 4:17
23:19 26:1
hurry 48:21
96:18
Hursin 40:24
43:4,5 65:8
Hurson 42:20
hurt 52:25 53:12
husband 28:25
29:4 36:19,21
37:2,3 48:13
49:2,5 50:9
51:8,15 53:15
61:22 70:15,15
93:9
H-a-n-n-i 46:9
H-e-a-l-y 93:4
H-o-l-l-e-r-b...
42:24
H-u-n-t-e-r 26:3
H-u-r-s-i-n 43:5

I

idea 9:12
identified 20:6
identify 3:6
6:16
IEP 44:16 57:11
103:18
ill 61:23
illegal 52:12
imagine 40:6,6
98:21
immediate 16:3
immediately
46:20
impaired 20:11
20:12
important 18:1
50:19 53:14,20
64:13 67:13,14
67:18 72:14
77:8 83:13
84:3 85:4,4
101:10 105:8
importantly
107:2
impossible 18:12
impressive 56:17
improve 4:21

27:1 28:2 44:1	65:21 67:10	62:3,6,8,10,15	11:4,14,24
60:18 63:3	77:5 78:11	62:19 63:13,19	12:20,25 15:19
70:20 71:6	86:17 87:2,3	63:25 64:3,6	17:23 18:4,15
96:12	91:23,24 92:1	64:21,22,25	19:9,19 23:12
improvement	96:6 100:10	65:3 66:19,24	24:4,9,18 26:7
18:18 31:20	101:2 102:13	67:1,3,4,12,23	27:3 28:13
improvements	interpreted	67:25 68:1,4	32:3 34:3,8
25:23 90:9	98:16 105:21	68:16,25 69:2	35:10,13,14,17
inaudible 13:6	interpreter 1:10	69:3,11,14,21	35:22 38:3
inciteful 24:21	5:18 8:10,14	69:23 70:11,17	40:16 42:10,11
included 21:1	8:25 9:9,17	70:18 71:11,13	42:25 43:23
24:8	10:9,10,15	71:14,25 72:13	44:5,13,23
includes 20:16	11:9,9,10,19	73:10,12,17	45:9 46:15,17
including 20:14	13:16 14:12	74:3,16 75:2,8	50:16,22 51:4
increase 19:11	15:11,13,15,22	75:18 76:20	54:2,24 55:16
19:18	16:3,4,9,15,18	77:3,7,11,12	55:18,25 56:11
independent	16:19,23 17:4	77:16 78:2,3,3	56:18 57:25
86:24	19:25 21:1,10	78:6,17 79:17	60:4,6,8,9,17
Indian 59:3	22:8,11,18,20	80:1,10,13,13	63:5,6,9 64:9
indicate 6:12	22:23 23:1,25	80:17 81:3,5,6	66:14 67:17
indicated 59:7	25:5 26:1,9	81:7,12,17	68:8,9,10,19
indicating 14:18	27:9,11,23	82:11,13,15	68:22 69:25
47:1	28:22 29:1,5,9	83:14,15 86:10	70:7,9 71:4,5
individuals	29:16,22 30:3	86:18,22 87:6	71:7,9,18,23
92:21,24	30:5,6,11,12	87:16,22 88:7	72:6,8,21,22
ineffective	30:15,17,18	88:7,9,21 89:4	73:2,6,13,14
27:13 64:19	31:8,14,15,16	89:8 90:1,16	73:16 74:10,19
infection 21:21	31:18,20,22	90:18,21,24,25	74:23 75:17,20
infinitely 40:19	32:9,14 33:23	91:1 92:5,8,10	75:24 76:13,14
influence 70:8	34:13,20 36:18	92:14 93:5,12	77:2,22 80:6
information 2:22	37:4,6,25 38:4	93:14,16,16,17	80:11,15,21,25
6:18 94:1	38:7,11,16,20	93:20,21,24,25	81:13 82:23
informed 10:2	40:3,12,14,25	94:4,6,11,13	83:8 84:6
infuriating 53:6	41:8,9,10,13	94:23 95:6,6,7	87:19 90:10
inhaler 96:10	41:15,20 42:4	95:17 96:23,23	91:7 94:20,23
initial 96:24	42:6,8,14,16	97:6,7,14,16	95:4 100:4,8
input 20:14	42:23 43:2,4	97:18,25 98:1	101:17,18
insignificant	45:2,4,10 46:4	98:7,10,11,14	103:10,11
61:16 76:11	46:4,6,8,12,13	98:16,25 99:4	104:8,14 105:6
inspired 55:12	46:21 47:8,15	100:11,15,16	105:14,17
inspiring 12:3	48:7 49:13,20	100:19,21,25	106:1,1,7,13
Institute 80:23	50:13,14 51:8	101:3,11,14	interpreter's
instructor 30:2	51:20 52:6,8	102:2,4,12,14	29:13 81:10
instrumental	52:10,13,16	102:16,18,19	interpreting
4:15	53:2,22 54:4	102:24 103:2,4	15:16 44:18
interact 54:24	55:2 56:8,15	104:18,22	57:19,21 71:19
interested 103:3	56:24,24,25	105:1,4,19,25	87:19 90:16
interesting	57:1,2,2,3,7	106:10	94:25
84:11	58:4,7,9,10,12	interpreters	interview 30:8
intern 69:6	58:15 59:21	3:10 5:7 7:23	30:11,14,19
interpret 40:2	60:5,25 61:3	8:16 9:11	31:9,12 94:11
41:7 51:15	61:11,19,23	10:19,20,21	94:17

interviewer 31:19	63:10,10,11,11 63:13,14	87:19 94:15	80:12,12,14,15
interviewing 30:9	Joy 23:23	kinds 101:24	80:16,24 81:3
inventor 50:4	judge 9:6 56:3	Klock 11:18	81:9,16,23,25
involved 64:10	Judy 59:8 61:19	17:16	82:25 83:4,4
64:15 74:13,17	61:20 79:24	knee 52:25	83:12,17,17
74:18 99:24,25	86:10,11	knew 30:5 31:20	85:7,8,13,13
IPA 18:10	Juris 4:15	46:20 57:12	85:16 87:21,21
issue 4:24 6:2	Jurus 95:16	67:7 97:7,17	87:23,24 88:8
12:22 32:12	104:18,23	97:17 98:6	88:18,19,20
38:3 51:8	J-a-c-k-i-e	Knights 59:9	89:10 90:12
52:24 73:10	77:17	61:19	91:15 92:2,17
74:8 81:19	J-i-l-l-i-a-n	Knock 35:23	94:17 95:1,24
84:3,11 85:22	68:17	knots 46:20	96:11,12,14,22
86:19,23 89:2	J-o-h-n-s-t-o-n	know 3:20 6:8	97:7,8,21,23
90:24 91:6	80:2	9:10 11:11	98:5,11,13,22
96:9	J-o-y 23:23	12:4,7 13:21	99:1,9,12,13
issues 25:8 52:2	J-u-r-u-s 104:24	13:22 14:4,17	99:14,18,23,24
64:17 67:17		14:24,25 15:1	100:16,23
73:7,12,12,18	K	16:8,22 20:2	101:16,18,21
77:8,10 85:21	Karen 8:6 10:15	20:24 21:3,14	101:22 102:8
97:1	10:16 11:15	21:15,16,16,17	103:2,12,20
	Karlee 4:1 23:13	21:17,20 22:4	104:6,7 105:5
	Katherine 66:17	22:12,13,15,16	105:8,9 106:1
	72:13,16	22:17,21,23	106:6,11,12
J	Kathy 8:7 11:19	23:5,12 27:24	knowledge 24:21
Jackie 74:2	11:20	28:1,3,7 30:7	103:11,14
77:16,17	Katie 72:17	30:12 31:2	known 6:5
jail 10:9	keep 14:10 15:8	32:22 33:5,6,7	Kotda 48:3 51:20
Janet 4:15 95:15	19:24 25:9	33:17,18 34:3	K-a-r-e-n 10:16
104:18,23	49:6 52:13,14	34:15 35:7,10	K-a-t-h-y 11:20
Jeff 11:18 17:9	54:7 58:3,18	36:3,5 38:9	K-e-t-o-l-a
17:11 43:13	71:4,5 80:16	39:21 41:21	51:22
Jillian 66:17	87:4 97:11	43:15,18 44:8	K-l-o-c-k 11:18
68:16,17	Kentucky 96:25	45:12 46:16,16	K-n-i-g-h-t-s
job 22:10 29:24	kept 10:5 16:14	47:1,5,6 48:11	61:20
31:9,21 70:9	16:25 34:11	48:14 50:10,10	
70:19 88:24	38:12 48:16	50:21,24 51:7	L
90:24 94:11	62:18 63:4	52:4,6,7,11,17	la 47:1,1,1
jobs 71:23	Kevin 11:17	52:19,21,22,23	labor 16:2
Jodi 89:23 90:1	15:22,23	53:2,8,14,17	LaBudd 59:10
90:2	kidney 40:4,5	54:15,17 55:19	66:19
Joe 79:24 82:15	62:1,13	55:24 57:6	lack 8:13 88:17
82:16	kids 15:10 22:1	62:4,13,20,25	lady 3:12
Joel 36:16 39:24	22:2 45:11,18	64:18 65:13	Lambert 8:6 9:17
39:24	50:11 54:15	66:5,9,10 67:8	9:20
Joe's 11:1	55:6,10,14	67:14,18 68:20	language 12:23
John 79:24 83:20	103:25	68:20 69:3,3	17:17,18,22
Johnston 66:18	kind 3:15 16:22	69:12,14,22	18:3 19:2
72:13,16 74:2	32:24 33:7,16	71:10,17,23	20:13,15,24
80:1,2	49:17 52:7	76:6 77:20,24	24:23 25:1
joke 61:17	56:5 58:16	77:25 78:9,24	36:1,2,4,4,6,7
Joseph 59:9		79:3,5,6,11,19	36:7,8,10

46:22 47:18
 57:16 64:22
 73:6 81:2,2
 83:2 90:14,18
Lansing 43:9
laptop 33:16,19
 38:10
large 6:20
larger 14:11
last-minute
 94:16 101:7
late 15:12 59:17
 73:19 88:8
 89:4 106:20,21
Laude 66:20
Laura 59:9 63:12
 66:16,19,20
law 8:20 13:19
 26:9,14 29:8
 34:2,19 41:13
 50:14 63:24
 86:1 91:4 94:3
laws 8:16 44:22
 84:5 85:9
lawsuits 24:17
lawyer 16:23
 46:11 47:6,7,9
lawyers 76:16
laying 62:25
lean 89:7
learn 28:2 43:25
 76:4 90:15
learning 57:5
 60:10 69:7
leave 3:20 7:6
 23:7,8 29:18
 35:17 68:1,3
 84:25 92:13
leaving 17:13
Lee 6:23,24
left 14:19,21
 30:21 42:6
 47:6 59:6
 67:24 81:19
 85:7 100:22
legal 7:14 100:5
legislation 24:1
 24:7 85:5,24
legislative 7:19
legislator 84:5
legislators 12:8
 26:12 85:2,3

legislature 7:15
 7:18
length 18:19
Leslee 4:25
letter 18:7
letters 17:21
 18:14,21 55:17
let's 46:11
 85:11 86:4,4
 88:13 96:22
level 9:13 10:22
 19:12,13 35:12
 45:19
levels 27:3
Levy 3:24
life 4:22 22:20
 40:14 50:9,11
 50:13 54:22
 63:19 71:9
 83:13 91:3
life-threatening
 78:22
light 25:2
limit 6:21 102:1
limited 20:14
Linda 36:16
 37:25 38:1
line 2:6 60:1
linked 24:1
lip 20:14 21:1
lips 48:14
list 11:16 25:14
 78:24 86:15
 103:7
listen 56:7 71:1
 71:3 80:7
listening 49:19
 79:21
listing 25:22
little 34:12
 38:12 59:3
 64:21 81:4
 82:10 86:22
 97:2 98:3
 99:21 100:13
live 10:16 11:8
 11:9,10 15:11
 15:18 16:3,4,9
 16:15 28:12
 32:14 35:2
 37:4 46:3,6
 49:13 53:2,21

64:23,25 65:4
 68:7 74:16,19
 74:22 75:1
 76:4,9 80:20
 87:4 97:2
 106:5
lived 68:7 95:24
 96:25
livelihood 81:15
lives 19:23
long 24:6 32:19
 35:25 59:25
 75:19 96:15
look 14:20 15:7
 20:5 45:10
 46:23 49:15,15
 50:23 79:8
 85:14 89:9
 98:25 106:3,14
looked 34:15
looking 24:12,20
 40:22 42:19
 103:20
looks 17:12
loopholes 35:21
Lori 4:23
lose 45:11
loss 9:2 55:15
lost 39:22 55:14
 60:19 63:1
lot 27:7,25
 28:16 32:13,22
 33:19 35:20
 46:17 49:14
 51:2 54:9 63:2
 64:8,23 70:2
 70:24 73:9
 83:5 87:11
 94:12
lots 13:17,17
Louisville 97:4
lousy 39:1 71:14
 100:8
love 37:2 52:23
 74:4 75:4
 91:14,14
 104:19,19
low 10:22 18:12
 19:21 44:10
 73:2
lower 13:1 18:10
 19:6 50:1,6

55:13 106:8,8
lowering 18:8
Luckily 49:10
lucky 73:3 80:11
 80:20 81:16,21
 81:23
lull 7:23
lump 87:15
lunch 42:7
Lundy 95:15 99:4
 99:5
Lynn 17:13 23:1
 23:2
L-a-B-u-d-d
 66:21
L-a-m-b-e-r-t
 9:21
L-a-u-d-e 66:20
L-u-n-d-y 99:5
L-y-n-n 23:2

M

M 1:17 108:17
Mac 50:6,8 51:18
machine 53:18
 79:6,15,18
Mack 48:4 53:25
 58:4,5
Mackinac 49:25
 50:2,5
mad 36:11 88:19
 88:20
Madonna 23:19
 28:22,23
main 82:22
mainstream 18:7
 32:5 45:7,8
 54:18,23 55:2
 55:7 56:21
 57:24 75:11,21
 80:18 90:6
Mair 11:17 14:12
major 35:19
 101:23
majored 80:23
making 8:8 12:3
 23:9
man 47:5 95:23
manager 27:23
 104:7
march 85:6
Marika 29:20

33:23 34:1
mark 7:1 95:14
marked 58:7
married 70:14
 95:23
Marty 95:15,17
 95:18
Mary 40:24 42:20
 47:23,25,25
 48:2,5,5
match 103:14
maternity 23:7
math 43:19,20
Matt 2:4 5:13
 6:6 83:23
 85:13
matter 9:8 40:14
 101:13 105:23
Maureen 4:17
 26:11
MBA 43:16
McKittrick 4:13
McMall 74:2
 77:16,18
MCR 106:3,11
McRee 36:17
 39:24,24
mean 22:5,17
 34:3 35:16
 55:18 63:8,8
 71:14 82:5
 96:15 99:9
 100:18,18
 101:1,5,10
 105:16
means 20:10
 71:14
meant 61:5
medical 4:12
 10:25 11:11
 21:21,22 40:13
 43:6 51:13
 62:5 68:10
 91:21 92:5
 94:19 100:5,9
 101:8
medication 60:25
 61:4,6
medicine 53:8
meds 97:21
meet 35:15 64:2
 69:16 78:18

meeting 3:20
 29:15 44:16
 105:10
meetings 4:6
 27:8
Mel 4:11
Melissa 89:24
 91:9 93:3
member 54:14
 93:1
members 3:25
 4:10,23 51:15
 83:5 93:1
men 84:21
mental 74:9,11
 74:13,16,19
 75:2 95:5
mentality 44:10
mentally 37:10
 49:14
mention 4:17,23
 69:19
mentioned 4:8
 100:17
mentor 103:16
mentoring 105:2
mess 8:4
met 84:24
metal 79:18
methods 84:23
Michael 11:17
 13:16,20
Michigan 1:1,12
 1:14 2:1 5:23
 5:24 6:2 10:18
 17:25 19:3
 20:23 21:5
 23:25 24:2,10
 24:13 25:6,14
 25:21,23 34:24
 35:10 43:16
 44:9,12,19
 49:24 50:5
 55:5 64:10
 73:1 80:17,20
 84:2,3,7 85:1
 85:15 95:24
 96:14 106:2,5
 106:14 108:3
Michiganders
 86:5,5
microphone 2:14

33:25 48:6
Millie 40:24
 42:20 43:4,5
 65:8
million 21:4
 86:5
mind 8:23 43:13
 72:15
mindful 2:23
mine 17:2 20:1
minimum 25:20
Minnesota 67:20
 68:7
minor 18:3
minute 2:19 6:25
 39:14 46:24
 52:19,20 53:3
 53:5,12 81:19
 101:2,4,11,13
 101:17
minutes 6:22
 16:8 33:6
 45:24 46:2
 47:3 48:8,23
 48:24 49:1,8
 58:18 77:5
Miracle 59:8,21
 59:22 95:15,17
 95:19
missed 48:19
missing 25:23
 48:1 94:1 95:8
mistake 98:19
misunderstand...
 101:23
Mitchell 8:7
 11:19
mom 61:2 69:9,10
 86:16,19
Monday 89:1
 106:23,23
monetary 40:18
 40:19
money 32:16,18
month 9:23,23
 30:25
months 31:3,5
 43:1
morning 2:4,16
 11:20 12:4
 16:11 17:16,17
 23:21 27:21

42:1,3 51:23
 93:12 95:18
 97:14,16
Morrison 4:13,14
 11:17,17 13:16
 13:20 15:22,23
 48:3 53:25
 54:4,5
mother 10:2,8
 12:14 37:16,16
 43:7 51:1
 54:13 60:22
 61:10 86:24
move 10:5 14:19
 14:21 60:21,21
 90:6 98:9 99:1
moved 10:4,18
 26:21 37:12
 49:23 67:20,20
movement 93:8
moving 52:17,18
MRI 78:23 79:7,9
 79:14
MSD 37:15,24
 42:25 44:20,21
 54:16 82:19
 95:20
MSU 30:2
muddled 67:9
music 73:16,17
M-a-d-o-n-n-a
 28:23
M-a-i-r 14:14
M-a-r-t-y 95:18
M-c-M-a-l-l
 77:18
M-i-l-l-i-e 43:5
M-i-r-a-c-l-e
 59:24 95:19
M-i-t-c-h-e-l-l
 11:20
M-o-r-r-i-s-o-n
 15:23 54:5

N

name 3:10,13
 5:13 6:6,16,17
 8:4,11 9:1,20
 10:10,15 11:20
 12:2 13:20
 14:13 15:23
 19:25 21:10

23:2 26:2
 27:21 28:23
 29:10,10,23
 31:25 32:1,10
 33:24 34:1,5
 37:6 38:1,22
 39:24 41:1
 42:24 43:5
 45:3 46:9
 49:21,22 51:21
 56:9 57:7 58:5
 59:22 61:19,20
 63:14 65:4
 66:20 68:17
 70:12 72:16
 73:24 74:7,7
 75:9 76:21,21
 77:17,17 80:2
 82:16,16 83:4
 86:11 93:3,6
 94:8 95:18
 99:5 102:5
 104:23
names 2:12 22:9
 83:5
Nan 20:1,2
Nancy 17:11
 19:25 20:1
Natalie 29:21
 34:20,22
nation 85:7
national 24:14
 24:15 25:16,18
 25:22 50:22
nationally 50:20
 50:22 51:3
native 17:17,18
natural 73:4
nature 17:19
 91:22
necessarily
 24:14
need 4:22 9:10
 10:13 11:8
 14:2,3,7,10
 20:13,25 24:17
 27:4,14 34:5
 35:9 36:13
 38:7 40:8,10
 40:12,14,17
 44:14 49:4,13
 50:25 51:6,11

51:18 53:8,9,9
 53:9,13 55:13
 56:17 58:11
 61:13,13,16
 62:2 63:8,12
 64:22,24,24
 66:3,8,14 67:3
 67:14 68:2
 69:5,9 70:8
 71:3,5,6,8,9
 71:18,21 72:7
 72:11 73:9,21
 74:6,18,22
 75:1,5,15,17
 75:18 76:6,14
 77:6,11 79:18
 80:6,21 81:11
 81:14 82:1
 83:11,16 84:22
 84:23 85:9,14
 85:22 87:24
 89:3,4,14
 90:24 91:6,15
 91:15,18,19
 92:4,25 94:17
 94:20 97:3,13
 97:15 99:11,11
 101:10 102:1,7
 102:17,23,24
 103:1,10,13,13
 103:14,21,22
 103:23 104:1,3
 104:11,17,17
 105:2,8,9
needed 8:18,20
 27:25 34:15
 40:17 64:9
 70:22 77:3
 84:17 90:9,21
 92:15 93:10,11
 93:23
needs 10:8 19:2
 20:22 21:17
 34:9 36:14
 51:11 55:13
 63:21 64:2,14
 64:15 76:12,13
 79:19 81:24
 91:3,4 92:23
 101:25 102:2
 104:2
neither 22:2

84:16 94:1
nervous 30:3,10
 58:8
never 15:25 16:6
 16:10 29:7
 30:22 42:8
 47:21 62:10
 86:18 88:7
 91:5 93:14
 98:4 105:17
new 20:8 23:12
 23:13
Newcomb 23:19
 28:22,23
newspapers 6:1
Newvine 29:20
 32:9
nice 51:23 59:3
 82:6 91:11
Nichols 74:2
 76:20,21
night 40:4 98:6
nighttime 97:13
Ninety 70:23
Niven 4:1
normal 59:2
norms 24:24
North 49:23
Notary 108:19
notch 68:9 73:6
 73:15,17
note 3:21 24:3
 57:9,11,16
 78:7
notes 57:10,12
 57:20,21 78:10
notice 99:19
 100:23 101:12
 102:1
noticed 31:19,19
 86:12 87:14
 100:2,13 103:9
nouns 36:9
Novi 30:2
nowadays 82:5
number 2:11,13
 2:13,23 3:14
 6:2 8:3,5,5,6
 8:7,7 19:10
 25:4,20 29:13
 41:5 106:4,4,4
 106:13,14

numbers 14:3
 59:15
numerous 18:14
 25:8
nurse 14:16,20
 29:2 38:14
 39:13,15 40:8
 45:25 48:21
 49:5 67:4,6,7
 93:15 102:10
nurses 76:16
 88:20 104:4
nutritional 30:1
N-a-t-a-l-i-e
 34:22
N-e-w-c-o-m-b
 28:24
N-e-w-v-i-n-e
 32:11
N-i-c-h-o-l-s
 76:22

O

Oakland 65:5,7
 74:10,25
oath 108:9
observations
 103:24
obviously 32:23
 34:13 84:7
occur 27:25
occurred 24:13
October 14:15
 41:16
offer 84:6,9
office 20:9 27:8
 67:2 97:1
offices 26:18
 86:14
official 2:25
 3:11 5:16 7:25
 107:4
officials 14:7
oh 14:5 31:24
 33:8 39:22
 46:25 61:4
 71:3 88:8
 93:16,18 100:9
okay 3:17 5:15
 7:21 8:12 9:18
 17:10,13 30:21
 33:1 40:1,1,23

40:23 41:19	oversight 25:7	44:22 61:13,16	45:13 65:9
42:20 53:24	owe 4:18	68:13 69:16	70:23 74:25
56:8 58:14,25	owes 21:22	75:15 76:19	105:11
59:4 71:13		94:3 95:9	perfect 26:24,25
73:20,23 75:4	P	passage 80:4	106:18
75:6 81:21	P 42:24	passed 8:17 17:5	perfectly 72:19
82:3 89:22	PA 20:6 23:4,4	24:4 26:14	period 2:20 7:10
95:11 96:17	40:10 69:13,18	30:22 36:12	7:22 18:15
98:10,13 99:3	73:19 75:14	42:9,9 81:18	19:8 36:10
102:23 106:18	76:19 80:4	86:4 99:19	37:5 76:19
old 36:8 37:11	83:12	103:6	periodically
56:22 57:19	page 91:17	passing 26:13	72:25
83:3 105:23	pain 14:22,22	32:7 60:19	periods 7:3
Older 82:1	49:12 53:1,9	passionate 91:11	permits 95:21
oldest 84:15	53:12 60:24,24	patience 107:1	person 20:7,10
Olivia 66:18	61:4,6 98:12	patient 37:1	20:10,24 27:14
73:24 75:8,9	painful 40:6	79:16,17 93:22	33:14 45:5
once 19:20 31:17	pains 97:2,8	93:24 94:4	46:21 49:16
39:10	Pam 11:17 17:9	pay 19:3 47:20	52:17,18 53:19
ones 14:3 71:2	17:11,16	50:3	57:9 64:12,23
one-handed 14:21	panel 3:6 4:14	paying 47:19	68:3 73:1 87:4
15:2 98:22	30:9 85:14	74:5	90:4,12 94:25
ongoing 51:11	paper 58:7	peers 18:9	102:13
open 2:20 22:14	paranoid 34:12	Peninsula 50:6	personal 77:10
30:1 106:22	parent 51:24	Peninsulas 50:1	personally 24:1
operating 98:2,8	70:22	people 2:6 3:18	persons 5:18
operation 22:15	parents 18:6,18	3:20 4:7 10:13	24:3 59:7
opportunities	44:17,21 57:12	12:6,11,12	person's 46:5
24:22 75:24	60:5,7,13 65:9	15:19 18:20	perspectives
opportunity 2:19	65:13 68:20,21	20:17 21:3,4	107:4
3:5 58:20	70:24,25 71:2	21:25 26:6	Peter 17:14
81:16	71:4 86:13	30:8,16 32:4	21:10,11
opposed 28:17	90:14 91:13	34:4 35:1	phase 18:18
oppression 36:14	92:9,18 103:17	40:15 53:5	phone 29:13
option 12:15	105:14,16	58:10 59:3	phonetic 17:13
27:6 44:12	part 2:25 5:16	61:11 67:17	physically 22:19
81:24 82:2	20:16 25:4	71:16 72:16	pick 3:10 45:16
oral 55:1 83:1	41:19 93:8	73:9 74:8 76:3	picking 19:10
order 2:11,24	95:6	76:6,9 80:6,13	picture 38:12
5:22 6:14 8:3	partial 78:25	80:20 81:25	pieces 85:24
92:24	participants	82:1,7 83:16	pissed 36:11
orders 52:9	6:20	85:16,25 88:16	52:21
organization	participate	88:25 89:14,15	place 25:11
6:17	107:3	89:25 90:10	27:12 47:14
original 20:6,10	particular 10:24	91:11 94:22	52:8 58:16
24:7	11:3 24:3	95:1 96:20	105:6 108:9
outside 91:1	particularly	99:11,13	placed 37:19
out-of-staters	90:10	103:20 104:15	places 26:8
106:7	partner 29:12	105:7	Plain 36:8
oven 65:24,25	pass 11:12 14:6	people's 68:2	plan 78:8
overnight 97:12	27:4,19,20	89:11	planned 82:18
97:15	29:8 35:12	percent 9:2	platforms 18:25

please 2:22 3:2 3:3, 9, 14, 21 6:8, 11, 15 7:2 8:22 13:5, 8, 24 15:18, 18, 18 32:6 36:2, 6 41:23 44:22 46:5 51:18 56:7 57:23 73:19, 22 76:19 80:16 81:15 82:6 89:14, 17 95:9 96:13 106:14	5:5 7:17 8:19 presentation 4:16 34:10 Presenter 8:3 presenters 8:3 presently 7:12 25:23 president 62:21 pretty 61:3 89:22 previously 19:7 primary 20:13 principal 77:3 103:19 principals 103:21 print 86:20 prior 26:14 37:8 38:25 private 12:15 85:20 91:3 privilege 72:23 83:21 probably 22:13 22:22 problem 16:12 42:14 48:7 57:1, 18 60:14 62:15 64:7 74:6, 9 82:22 90:23 105:2, 11 problems 26:6, 11 62:1 63:16 96:3 procedures 6:5 97:23 proceedings 107:6 108:8, 13 process 95:7 107:3 processes 56:4 profession 21:21 21:22 professional 24:9 70:8 72:7 76:15 102:20 professionally 16:21 professionals 17:25 profoundly 18:6 program 18:7	45:4 52:24 55:1 65:6, 11 65:18 77:22 81:2 90:6, 7 programs 57:24 promulgated 7:18 proposed 1:9 4:3 5:17 6:11 7:12 17:22 19:17 59:7, 13 protect 27:10 protecting 19:16 protection 24:2 proud 34:23 provide 11:14 18:4, 12 providing 8:16 40:16 103:3 provision 101:21 psychology 102:10 public 1:8, 8 2:20 3:19 4:5 5:17 6:4 7:9 7:10 12:15 17:24 32:5 37:8 54:20 82:20 84:13 105:20 106:21 108:19 publicly 4:4 published 5:25 6:2 pull 96:20 punished 17:6, 7 22:3 pushing 88:19 put 4:20 10:7, 9 18:19 19:23 28:17 36:10 62:23 79:12 83:1 85:11 97:22 98:3, 17 101:25 putting 19:15 40:18 p.m 7:8 106:23 107:6	26:17 100:4 103:23 qualified 10:23 11:10, 14 17:2 17:3, 4 27:11 30:4, 13, 18 31:13, 17 38:2 40:11 43:17 58:10, 11 75:24 80:5, 15, 21 82:24 83:2 92:9 94:12 100:9 102:12 104:12 105:17 106:7 quality 4:22 12:16 28:7 32:4 34:3 71:6 73:2 76:1 quarter 89:20, 21 quasi-interpr... 62:7 question 3:7, 7 6:9 39:14, 18 39:20 56:16, 16 89:19 questions 48:17 97:24 quick 7:24 quickly 45:16 quite 30:9, 18 38:23 52:21 61:22 84:11 90:7 quote 22:21
pleasing 56:20 plus 55:6 podium 3:16 point 5:1 26:10 37:22 40:8 58:21 87:22 104:10 police 9:25 10:5 10:12, 12 52:4 52:5, 5, 8, 14 101:8 politicians 40:17 position 30:1 positive 81:21 possess 25:21 possible 4:16 7:4 25:15 94:21 post 96:25 posted 43:9 54:12 posts 54:11 potential 24:19 praise 82:8 pray 10:11 prayers 10:11 praying 42:15 predict 7:16 predicted 24:15 prefer 67:12 preferences 68:2 pregnant 16:2 prepared 3:19 7:16 23:24 94:25 preparing 4:5 present 2:19 5:5			<hr/> R <hr/> raise 5:8 6:24 13:24, 25 14:9 raised 13:17, 21 90:2 ran 25:8 rates 11:4 reached 6:25 98:20 read 17:12 18:14 26:21 35:5 48:14, 20 49:3 64:22 74:1 90:15 reading 12:24 17:20, 24 20:15
		<hr/> Q <hr/> QA 25:6 qualifications	

20:15 21:2	registered	13:8 23:10	76:21
49:1	102:10	request 9:8,9	Rhonda 1:17
ready 58:19	registering	101:7	76:21 108:17
93:12	106:11	requested 16:8	rid 98:24
real 4:7 49:13	registration	19:7 29:1 30:3	right 12:6 14:8
realized 24:6	4:25 7:7	59:15 102:11	14:10 21:18
37:1	regs 36:12 51:18	102:12	27:18 33:25
realizing 24:21	99:7,12,18,23	requesting 30:4	36:19 38:6,24
really 3:8 8:15	100:14 102:8	100:15	42:12 46:4,5
12:3 13:18,23	regular 77:21	require 35:21	48:25 49:3,8
13:23,23 16:21	78:1,4,4,16	required 7:12	50:6,24 53:21
17:5 20:22	regularly 52:21	26:17 51:9	58:6,8 60:21
21:2 22:1 23:5	regulated 70:2	94:24	67:5,11 68:21
23:5,13,14	regulations 3:19	requirement 34:2	68:22,24 69:19
25:11 33:10	8:17 17:22	requirements	72:24 73:3
34:14,18 35:8	rehab 31:5	35:11,15,18	75:25,25 76:1
37:4 38:10	reiterate 19:20	43:24 100:12	76:3,10,13
46:16,23 47:6	related 59:4	106:8	77:6 78:1,16
52:21 54:6,21	relationship	requires 43:16	78:20 79:5,17
55:21 58:17	98:6 99:1	rescued 22:19	85:16 87:15
63:2 67:13	relax 53:9	reset 45:25	89:3 92:4,10
68:12 69:18	reliability	residential	96:15,21 97:6
70:5,6 71:6,18	24:16	65:10 90:3,7	100:25 105:16
72:23 73:3	reliable 25:10	resources 25:13	105:22
77:23 81:3,5	rely 44:13	respect 9:9	rights 1:1 5:14
82:18 88:1	remain 72:18	56:20 65:9,12	5:20 10:14
96:4 99:9	106:22	68:2 89:14	12:22 19:16
103:17 104:9	remaining 6:25	respectful 3:2	20:9 75:11
reason 10:7 19:3	remarks 17:20,24	7:2 60:8 68:1	79:16 84:1
19:10 40:9,13	remember 14:2	68:5	85:6,15 86:6
63:15 64:12	26:4 34:10	respecting	89:11,11,15
93:7 105:15	39:12 51:1	103:22	92:22 93:8
reasons 4:12	60:4	response 24:17	right-hand 2:10
Rebecca 45:2,3	remind 18:1	responsibility	rigorous 25:9
receive 1:8 6:10	remove 69:10	17:1 41:11,12	risks 25:23
receiving 20:13	removed 21:17	47:12 72:9	RMR 1:17
recognize 5:9	88:9	responsible	RN 104:6 105:12
recognized 36:3	removing 81:17	52:15	road 69:21
recommend 67:16	Renea 23:19	rest 19:22 41:8	Roberta 29:20
record 3:1,11	27:21,22	81:13 106:1	32:9,10
28:17 58:23,24	repeat 51:7	result 59:14	Roberts 66:18
59:16 104:20	report 6:19	results 48:20	73:24 75:8,10
104:21 106:22	reported 108:7	49:1,3	Robin 41:2,9
107:5	reporter 3:11	resume 59:6	Rochester 80:23
reduced 108:10	5:11 58:21	retest 19:11	roll 37:22
reflective 24:20	108:1	retired 26:14	Ron 12:2 36:15
25:1	represent 6:18	43:15	36:16 37:6
refused 64:4,6	23:5,6,13,14	retirement 27:20	38:20,22
77:11 92:14	23:16	77:8	room 14:16 16:6
regard 103:9	representation	review 2:22 7:14	30:10 38:7,17
register 6:2	23:15	revisions 25:24	39:10 41:4,6
35:16 95:12	representing	Rhoda 74:1 76:20	41:21 67:6,22

67:25 68:1,3,4
68:5 72:21
82:3 98:2,8
Rose 4:1 66:17
70:11,12
Roseline 8:6
9:17
Rosie 9:20
round 4:19
RPR 1:17
rug 76:11
rule 3:3 20:8,10
26:16 28:4
106:4
ruled 20:25
rules 1:9,10 3:6
3:19,25 5:18
6:11 7:12,13
7:17 8:17,20
11:12 17:22
19:17 20:18
24:19 25:3,17
26:15,20,23,24
27:2,2,10,17
28:17,19 36:12
50:15 51:18
59:7 71:22
75:19 86:1
99:7,12,17,23
100:14 102:8
104:21,25
105:24 106:6
106:25
running 52:9,14
58:17
rural 97:3
R-e-n-e-a 27:22
R-o-b-e-r-t-a
32:10
R-o-b-e-r-t-s
75:10
R-o-s-i-e 9:20

S

sad 9:23 13:9
82:21
Safe 107:4
safeguards 24:10
25:10
safety 28:7 77:9
Saginaw 29:11
32:15,16 61:21

62:10
Sandy 23:20
29:22,23
sat 26:19 33:8
89:5
satisfactory
36:25
Saturday 1:16
2:2
saved 22:20
32:16 63:19
saving 32:18
saw 24:1 54:24
88:15
saying 10:6,8
14:25 15:15
16:14 34:11
38:15 52:17
71:3
says 84:7 101:11
106:5
scale 24:14
scared 55:21
scheduled 106:20
scheme 76:15
school 1:12 5:11
5:23 32:5
35:20 42:2
43:15 44:12,17
45:14 50:25
51:3 54:19,20
54:21,21 55:4
55:4,5,7,7,9
55:15,23,24
56:1,23 58:6
65:10 69:2,2
69:10 75:11,21
76:23,24 77:20
77:21 78:6
80:18 84:2,14
85:1 90:3,8,25
102:9,11
103:18 105:20
105:20
schools 12:15,16
12:19 18:1
26:18 37:9,12
45:7 54:15
55:11 56:22
69:15 71:1,1,3
71:7 82:20
90:22 103:9

105:21
science 103:12
screaming 92:13
screen 14:24
35:2 64:21
98:22
Scripter 36:16
37:7,25 38:1
scrub 98:2
seat 10:3
second 3:6 20:16
21:13 31:12
53:13 82:4
99:7 100:21
secondary 18:22
19:1,4
secondly 27:5
39:22 75:5
78:21 83:7
103:16 106:3
secretary 30:24
31:6
Security 82:4
sedated 62:15
Sedlacko 17:14
23:1
see 4:2,9 10:4
12:6,24 13:9
14:3,8 15:15
19:6 21:13
26:21 31:23
32:21 33:4,13
34:4,7 35:3,6
36:22 39:2
45:17 48:10
51:23 53:15
54:7 55:6
66:23,25 72:24
73:9 86:19,20
87:18 89:7,8,9
91:11 94:23
97:14 104:20
seeing 83:7
seen 30:1 54:25
55:11,12 60:3
86:12,14 88:14
90:9 100:7
seldom 85:5,5
self 81:17
self-contained
55:1
self-evident

84:21
semester 102:11
send 12:15 45:13
54:19 55:17
sending 37:23
senior 47:14
sensory 20:14
sent 5:4 17:21
43:8 47:16
54:19,22
separate 18:24
September 19:8
Seres 89:23 90:1
90:2
serious 102:15
seriously 20:12
serve 25:11
service 11:5
services 13:22
27:23 77:9,9,9
session 7:19
set 26:20 27:12
28:4 39:7,15
46:1 48:8,9,21
108:10
setting 18:23
32:5 33:21
39:7 54:23
74:16
settings 17:23
19:1 24:8
setup 33:9
seven 27:20
seventh 60:2
80:10
severe 62:1
severity 62:22
Shame 14:1
shape 89:22
Shari 73:23 74:3
sharing 65:21
80:3 107:3
Sharpe 48:3
53:25 56:8,9
sheets 2:22
Sheryl 13:23 4:9
23:9
Shirley 29:20
31:22
shocked 56:23
shooting 14:22
short 32:2 96:4

shot 53:9
shouting 52:9
show 9:13 13:9
 13:13 14:4,7
 41:18 52:5
 56:19 93:20
 94:24 95:2
showed 15:5,6,13
 16:6 29:5 30:7
 42:8,14 78:23
 93:14
showing 42:11
shows 56:15,19
Shriner 45:2,3
shut 39:11 48:12
shuts 45:24
shy 86:25
sick 56:14 62:11
 83:7 96:3 97:1
side 16:6 40:12
 87:15
sign 14:20,23
 15:2,14 16:21
 17:22 18:3
 20:15,24 21:7
 29:3 34:13,16
 36:1,2,4,6,6
 36:10 39:25
 43:13 47:25
 57:15 62:8
 66:6,9,10 67:8
 73:6 83:2
 88:23 90:14,15
 90:18 91:24
 95:13 99:1
 100:8 103:15
 103:23 104:2
signal 58:18
signed 2:7 6:12
 58:20 65:23
 66:2 67:8 86:2
 102:14
signing 33:14
 35:3,6 43:11
 56:3,25 66:5
 75:9 98:21
 102:16 103:24
signs 57:16 67:4
 67:7
silently 49:18
simple 32:3
 39:14,18 87:4

sinus 38:3
sister 12:18
 95:23
sit 32:25 33:1
 53:12 77:5
sitting 12:1
 33:8 73:13
 88:22 102:22
situation 9:4,6
 10:24 29:25
 39:6 43:7
 54:18 74:13
 78:22 81:18,24
 82:21 97:18
 101:8
situations 55:2
 68:11,11 74:18
 74:19
six 43:1
sixth 60:1
skill 9:14 81:10
skilled 22:8
 57:2 102:12
skills 19:13
 27:3 44:1,14
 46:15,22 70:21
 72:3 103:13
slow 67:7 81:4
slowly 3:10 6:17
small 38:12
 86:19
Smith 73:24 74:3
 74:4
smoking 22:12
social 11:21
 82:4 92:16
 105:12
societal 24:24
soda 65:23,25
 66:1
somebody 23:10
 34:12 39:1
 93:2 105:1
somewhat 10:19
 62:9
son 21:17 41:23
 42:2 61:24
 62:7,13 96:13
 96:17
sons 54:18
soon 53:25
sorry 13:20

31:24 33:20,20
 33:21 38:21
 49:1 72:2,18
 101:14 102:17
sound 46:23
Southeast 64:10
span 24:12
speak 2:9 6:11
 6:13,15,21 7:4
 8:24 9:3,5
 11:22 12:8
 17:7 26:6 27:5
 29:24 39:3
 43:12 58:8,10
 58:20 64:14
 73:25 75:12
 81:6
speaker 29:19
 79:23
speakers 2:15
 6:13 13:11,12
 89:23 95:12
speaking 2:11
 23:4,22 27:15
 36:19 37:2,3
 48:6
speaks 48:2
 59:12
special 84:22
specifically
 11:23 43:10
 106:4
speed 18:20
 69:16
spell 3:9 6:17
 33:24 66:3
 83:4
spelling 20:15
 30:15 51:21
spent 40:3
spoke 37:16
spoken 20:13
spoon 66:2
SS 108:4
St 11:1 108:5
staff 3:25 13:13
 27:7 41:7
 77:11
staffing 25:9
stand 4:7 7:1
 12:7 32:6,7
 33:3 71:19

98:24 100:5,12
standard 25:6,20
 69:17 70:7
 76:9,14 78:19
 80:16
standardized
 25:13
standards 13:1
 18:8,10 19:21
 24:16 70:7
 75:18 76:17,18
 104:21,25
 105:7,15,24
 106:8,9
standing 33:13
 88:18
stands 100:25
start 2:5,8,13
 3:15 8:8 16:22
 37:19 59:1
 94:24
started 2:5 33:9
 33:12 54:6
 59:17 63:3
 89:20 106:19
 106:20
starting 19:8
state 19:3 20:23
 23:25 25:7,16
 25:18,21 35:14
 43:16 44:11
 84:2,6 90:3
 95:5 106:2,13
 108:3
statement 23:24
 95:13
States 84:19
State-created
 25:5
station 10:12
stations 9:25
 10:12
stay 13:11,13
 33:5 55:14
 56:5 58:16
stayed 67:25
staying 59:12
 86:23
stenographically
 108:8
stent 97:22
 98:18

step 40:17 85:6 92:7	submit 2:20 7:6 7:7	99:12 100:11	18:21 32:15
stick 89:8	submitted 7:13 17:24	surgery 22:15 60:23 62:8,9	43:10 45:4
stigma 22:3	subpar 11:4,6	62:19 82:10,12	46:11 48:11,15
stinks 103:25	successful 16:15 71:9 76:7	93:10	49:15,18 50:5
stomach 46:20	successfully 24:6 83:17	Susan 95:15 99:4 99:5	54:10 56:21
stones 40:4,5	suffered 75:19 78:12	sweet 32:2	63:16 65:17
stood 33:3 92:22	suggest 18:14	swept 76:11	68:19 81:20
stop 16:22 22:12 34:9,11,11,11 36:13 40:18 61:7 75:17	suggested 9:24	switch 52:13	84:3 88:13
stops 58:22	suggestion 104:10	system 25:6,7 27:24 28:4,6	95:22 102:6
story 43:8 65:19	supervision 108:11	28:18 37:21	talked 63:21
straight 43:12	supply 24:18	39:11,16 40:13	talking 27:15 32:12 36:24
straighten 84:10	support 9:22 13:9,13 24:11	92:22 105:3,7	38:14 40:1
straightened 15:17	supported 92:24	systematic 19:21	48:13,16 70:5 88:4
Street 1:13	supporter 27:6	systems 28:16	Tami 40:23 42:19
strength 63:4	supporting 18:8 31:24 82:9 91:14	S-c-r-i-p-t-e-r 37:7 38:1	task 84:18
stress 49:14	supports 28:11	S-e-d-l-a-c-k-o 23:2	teach 32:6 43:18 43:19,20,20,21 78:8 82:24 83:3
stretch 58:16	supposed 31:16 32:25,25 35:4 37:18 38:5 45:9 60:18 79:19 93:11 100:16	S-h-a-r-i 74:3	teacher 43:15 45:14,18 65:17 65:20 66:7 70:14 77:4 78:7 81:4,8 83:1 90:17 102:21 105:21
strict 106:6	sure 6:11 12:16 12:19 21:24 23:9,10,14 29:6 47:25 51:21 53:21 55:25 59:23 62:1 79:13 84:23 85:3 86:4 94:18	S-h-a-r-p-e 56:9	teachers 19:3 32:6 37:13 43:16,19 44:3 45:8 66:11,13 82:23,24 84:14 103:19,21 104:8,11 105:12
stricter 28:4,19 50:15		S-h-i-r-l-e-y 32:1	technical 94:13
stroke 15:4 92:6 92:12		S-h-r-i-n-e-r 45:3	technology 24:25 27:7 80:23 81:22
struggle 12:19 12:20 30:16 46:2 52:10 67:11 88:18,21 88:21,21 99:16		T	teenagers 76:24
struggled 33:10 52:3 69:3		table 5:1 66:2	teens 57:20
struggling 53:7		tablespoon 66:1 66:3	teeth 11:13 78:25
stubborn 48:16		tablet 86:22	television 74:14 74:15
stuck 15:7		take 3:8 7:22,24 19:11 24:6 41:24 47:7,9 47:20 48:24 50:21 51:6,9 52:14 54:1 56:4 58:15 65:10 78:1,10 78:24,24,25 79:1,14 87:16 95:2,14	tell 8:19 11:8 12:8,8,10 17:1 26:23 27:14 28:9,14,15 39:13 41:8 62:21 65:18
student 56:25 57:11,13,17,18 57:22 65:22 66:4 68:24 69:7,11 83:1,3 90:15,19		taken 14:16 21:19,20 41:16 41:24 42:1 60:22 64:25 86:24	
students 18:25 44:10,11,11,23 54:25 65:16 68:20 78:15 103:17		taker 57:10,11 57:17	
stuff 62:22 78:11 87:12		talk 13:19 15:24	
stupid 87:5			
submission 7:14			

66:6 76:3
 88:16 98:12
telling 43:13
 52:19 53:5
 88:13
ten 29:14,15
 47:3 59:2
tend 45:8,11
tended 11:3
tense 70:19
term 66:1
terminology
 11:11 94:13
 103:12
terms 25:18 96:3
 103:15
terrible 60:24
territory 24:24
test 18:24 32:21
 33:12 48:20
 51:9 69:16
 78:9 88:15
testimony 2:8
 6:22 13:5
 108:9
testing 24:15
 25:7,13,16
 51:11
tests 15:3 32:19
 33:9
Texas 44:16
thank 3:17,23
 4:4,10 5:3,7
 5:10 8:9,21
 9:16 13:15
 15:21 17:8
 21:9 22:25
 25:25 28:20
 32:8 34:18
 38:19 39:23
 40:21 42:18
 43:3 44:25
 47:22 49:19
 56:7,10,11,12
 56:17 58:13
 59:12,23 61:18
 65:2 66:14
 68:15 70:10
 72:12,15 73:8
 73:13,14,22
 75:6,13 77:15
 77:19 79:21

82:14 83:22,25
 86:3,8 87:7
 89:18 91:8,10
 93:3 94:5,7,7
 95:10 99:3,6
 99:22 102:3
 106:16 107:1
thankful 22:9
 37:23
thanks 5:11
 99:25
theatrics 87:20
therapy 29:12
Theresa 48:4
 53:25 54:3
 58:4,5 59:8,11
 59:11,20,21,22
thin 63:2
thing 9:11 13:18
 30:23 35:9
 38:9 49:24
 71:21 84:8
 87:4 95:22
 103:9
things 2:7 7:23
 15:17 20:5
 21:13 22:18
 23:15 27:1,12
 48:17,19 52:13
 52:14,15 54:25
 55:1 61:25
 63:1 69:4 83:5
 88:12 91:22
 95:20 97:21
 99:20 105:8
think 4:18 9:4
 9:12 14:5
 16:10,20 18:7
 22:7 26:9,10
 27:6 34:5 35:9
 39:22 44:21
 50:8,16,18,24
 50:24 58:17
 67:25 68:2,5
 68:21,23 71:21
 73:5 74:14,20
 78:15,19 81:14
 81:22 97:9
 100:6,15,16
 101:25 103:21
 105:8
thinking 12:5

30:4 33:8
 50:16
third 47:13
 66:25 100:21
Thomassen 23:23
Thorpe 79:25
 87:6,7
thought 12:5
 15:4 21:12
 22:16 30:21,23
 38:5 39:19
 42:9 47:5,10
 47:11,13,17
 49:24,25 50:2
 50:4,6 62:4
 64:13 69:5
 88:15 97:3
 98:3
three 5:25 6:22
 8:2,6 11:2
 12:14 48:24
 49:1,8 51:17
 52:11 54:18
 66:22 70:16
 78:6,12 87:10
 93:19 100:17
 100:19 101:12
 101:21
three-day 101:20
 102:1,1
three-minute 7:1
three-year 18:17
Tim 74:2 80:1,2
time 2:23 3:4,21
 7:3,18 12:7
 13:13 15:19
 18:20 21:16
 27:17 29:14
 31:13 33:19
 35:24,25 36:13
 36:21 37:10
 38:25 39:6,19
 40:1,12 43:25
 44:1,2,3,22
 54:17 55:3
 56:13 58:17
 59:3,7 62:18
 64:18 70:20
 75:19,20 78:2
 80:12 82:4,14
 88:22 91:20,20
 92:12 93:10,20

94:8,17 95:21
 96:4,7 97:13
 98:5 99:3
 100:20,25
 101:19 102:1
 106:16 107:2
 108:9
timekeeper 6:24
times 3:3 7:21
 33:20 38:2
 72:1 74:20
 86:15,24 96:6
 101:18
timing 106:19
tiny 38:12 64:21
 86:22 97:2
tired 53:16,17
tireless 3:24
tirelessly 3:18
 26:12
today 4:11 5:5
 6:7,10,21 7:7
 54:8 70:25
 71:16 80:7
 83:21 84:9,18
 84:25 85:10
 91:10 98:23
today's 6:8
Todd 4:13
told 10:5 22:11
 22:12,17,20
 30:24 31:4
 37:13 39:1
 41:5,11 46:13
 48:10,21 49:5
 69:8,9 77:3
 79:2 88:5 89:6
 94:14
tonsils 21:17,19
 21:19
tools 25:13
top 52:7 68:9
 73:6,15,17
 78:13
totally 20:11
 63:17
touch 30:20
tough 17:12
town 4:24 18:23
 97:3
Tracy 48:3 53:25
 54:2 56:8,9

trained 32:23 92:16	type 54:7 62:14 76:13	upstairs 41:5, 25 93:22	38:18, 25 39:1 39:5, 5 45:20
transcribed 6:19	T-e 59:23	use 11:3 16:4	45:23, 24 48:5
transcription 108:11, 13	T-h 59:23	27:9 33:24	48:8, 21, 24
travels 107:4	T-h-e-r-e-s-a 59:22	42:25 46:14, 15	49:6 51:16
Trayner 40:24	T-h-o-m-a-s-s... 23:23	51:16 78:3	53:17, 23 57:5
42:20 47:23	T-h-o-r-p-e 87:8	82:2, 7 87:5	60:25 61:11
48:5, 5		90:25 91:2	63:16, 25 64:1
treat 85:25		Usually 32:14	64:20, 24 74:12
treated 86:1	U	U.S 12:1	79:3, 4, 5, 5, 10
treatment 92:25	uh-huh 38:8	V	79:17 81:20, 23
trouble 12:21	ulcer 62:24	vague 101:1, 22	81:25 82:2
16:23, 24 39:8	ultimately 19:22	validate 92:1	86:19 87:5
96:11	uncle 86:23, 25	validity 24:16	88:13, 14, 16
true 108:12	uncomfortable 22:5 30:12	valuable 40:19	89:5, 6, 7, 10
truly 19:15	underestimated 61:15	value 40:18, 19	95:7 98:21, 24
truths 84:20	understand 15:2	variety 68:11	106:4, 8
try 39:25 70:20	19:5, 7 28:14	vastly 19:1	V-i-r-t-u-e 21:11
88:24	28:15 30:15	verbs 36:9	
trying 14:20, 20	48:13, 15, 17	versus 20:23	W
14:23, 23 15:2	51:5 57:1, 14	Victor 89:24	wait 16:14 39:16
15:14, 14 16:25	60:16, 17 64:1	94:6, 8	39:16 41:21, 22
25:8 33:13	64:21 65:12, 12	video 7:6	41:22, 22, 22
40:7 49:6	71:12 79:8	videotaped 106:24	48:23 52:19, 20
53:11 55:16	99:2 100:10, 12	Vinson 4:24	53:3, 4, 11
67:10 86:21	102:7, 17	Virtue 17:14	waited 16:7, 7, 7
87:21 88:20	103:25 104:1	21:10, 11	16:7, 10, 11
96:8 97:9, 20	104:15, 16	visit 41:3 42:2	39:11 41:20
tubes 63:1	understanding 100:19	visits 91:21	42:7, 7, 11, 11
Tuesday 40:3	understood 37:21	vital 56:6 81:15	93:13, 13, 13, 19
turn 48:25 49:4	39:5 70:22	vocational 31:4	98:13, 13
49:4, 4	79:13	voice 9:19 17:7	100:20
turned 6:14	unfortunately 77:22 103:19	84:9 85:1	waiting 27:20
33:17	union 13:14	voicing 9:18	88:18, 23, 23
TV 49:16 53:4, 7	United 84:19	volume 6:20	94:10
74:20	university 96:13	volunteered 81:6	walk 95:1
twice 81:21	97:4 103:8	vote 13:24, 25	walked 39:10
twisted 27:16	unmentioned 5:2	14:2 85:9	wall 10:7
two 4:19 8:6	unquote 22:22	VR 31:3	Wallace 4:18
11:25 18:24	unrecognized 3:22	VRI 8:12 11:7	26:12
22:13 25:20	uphold 19:17	14:17, 19, 23, 24	want 2:7 4:17
26:19 29:25	upper 2:10 50:1	15:7, 24 16:4, 5	5:7, 8 8:8
30:20, 22 31:3	upset 29:17	16:6 27:5, 6, 11	11:12, 12 13:1
38:24 45:24	30:19 47:5	28:13 29:1	13:18, 23 14:25
46:15 51:1	52:21 71:17	32:12, 15, 15, 15	15:8, 15, 24
52:11 57:17	88:8, 10	32:16, 20, 21, 22	16:4, 9 17:5
66:22 69:18		33:2, 4, 19 35:8	20:17 21:2
70:15 91:13		35:9, 10, 12, 14	22:16 23:14, 16
96:16 99:22, 24		36:20, 22, 24	25:14 26:23
101:21		37:1, 4 38:16	27:5 28:17
two-year 19:8			29:24 34:18, 25

35:20 37:4	56:25 69:24	73:23 74:5	76:23 77:1
43:10,12,19,20	100:1	79:23 89:19	80:18 82:5
43:24,24,25	way 2:14 3:15	95:11 106:18	90:8 96:25
44:1,2,5 45:4	8:8 14:22 16:6	West 1:13	97:11
50:15,21 51:13	20:5,18 24:12	Whalen 4:11	worker 11:21
53:2,21 56:10	37:9 47:6	wheel 53:3	92:16
56:11,17,21	53:22 60:3	whoa 88:5,5,5,6	workers 105:12
58:3,9 59:12	63:18 85:25	88:6,6,6	working 2:14
59:23 65:11,14	94:1 96:18	wife 16:2,5,5,12	4:15 11:22
65:17 66:14	Wayne 44:8,9	38:24 39:11	15:9 25:21
68:13,19,24	74:11	41:1,16 84:7	26:17 52:11
69:6,13 75:13	weak 63:4	Williams 79:24	61:2 62:14
76:6,10 79:11	Web 43:9	82:15,16	65:16 66:4
82:8 86:3	website 20:9	willing 18:18	74:14 81:7
89:12,15,16	week 29:5 37:14	28:1 78:10	85:16 90:6,23
90:25 91:1,1,2	62:18	window 96:19	98:12 105:5
91:5,9 95:22	weeks 30:20,22	wins 12:11	106:9
99:6,22 104:6	101:21,21	wisdom 24:20	works 90:25
104:23 106:21	weight 63:2	wish 6:11,21	workshop 34:11
wanted 10:18	Welcome 40:25	73:25	world 13:22 90:5
11:22 16:13	well-being 19:24	wishes 65:9,13	worried 53:8
28:1,3 29:3	went 10:1 16:2	woke 62:20	worry 75:15
39:2,20 46:13	29:6 30:14	woman 42:3	worth 14:5
46:15 47:25	32:19,20 33:16	women 85:9	wouldn't 28:13
48:20 50:3	37:13,15,17	women's 64:16	55:20 72:15
59:25 63:16	38:21 39:4,13	wonderful 13:11	98:23
64:3 69:12	41:3 42:2,15	27:7 50:1	wow 69:5 81:8
81:20 84:12,13	43:1 46:20	81:22	98:3
90:14 104:6	47:14 48:16	wondering 47:24	write 16:13
106:20	53:16 56:23	woozy 61:3,8	26:20 43:2
wanting 16:24	57:5 61:24,25	word 36:2 65:23	45:8 55:17
wants 2:9 61:4	62:7 63:22	94:15	62:6,17 78:11
Ward 17:14 23:21	65:21 67:6	words 36:9 84:19	writing 7:6
23:22	78:5 80:22	wore 20:4	45:10
Warsaw 23:9	81:3,21 82:3	work 3:24 4:5	written 20:5
wasn't 3:21 9:23	82:14 87:11	5:1 14:23	23:24 27:10
10:4 16:14	88:3 89:1,5	26:12 31:17	29:13 39:14
29:3,6 30:4	90:2 93:15	32:21,22 33:3	73:25 84:19
31:16 36:22	96:3 97:4,10	33:10,15,15,21	106:24
38:15,17 41:11	98:17 102:11	34:4 35:8,17	wrong 21:19 76:5
47:17 62:1	102:13 105:20	37:1 39:17	83:6 103:4
63:25 64:2,2	weren't 32:23	51:2 54:23	wrote 43:8 84:5
67:11 77:5,23	41:17 48:1	68:10 69:15	85:23
92:10	94:15	77:12 82:19,20	W-a-r-d 23:22
waste 39:19	Wesaw 2:4 5:13	84:12,16 85:10	W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s
88:22	6:6 8:22 11:16	85:22 88:22	82:17
wasting 36:13	13:7 17:9	90:22 93:22	
watch 3:14 87:21	23:18 29:19	94:10 95:20	Y
105:3,7,12	36:15 40:22	104:4	yanking 53:10
watched 54:11	42:19 47:23	worked 3:18 24:8	yay 83:14,14,14
55:10	53:24 58:14,25	26:12 37:21	yeah 36:9 38:8
watching 14:24	63:10 66:16	65:6,15 74:10	71:5 88:1 98:4

year 26:14 27:19
 66:25 93:9
 99:20 100:2
years 11:22 20:4
 22:7,13 24:12
 24:22 25:19
 26:5,10,20
 27:20 29:25
 38:24 43:14
 44:6 51:10
 55:6 56:22
 57:17,19 61:22
 63:20 65:7,15
 66:22,24 68:8
 70:17 74:10
 78:6,12,21
 83:3,24 87:13
 90:8 99:16
 105:23
year-and-a-half
 76:25
yesterday 13:10
young 60:20
 77:20
youngest 84:15
youth 76:24

Z**zero** 56:2**\$****\$40** 66:9**\$400** 47:11**1****1** 98:11 106:4,13**1st** 6:3**1.2** 21:4**10** 86:5 98:11,15

98:16

10th 37:20**10-year** 37:11**10:56** 58:14**10:57** 58:23**100** 9:2**11-year-old** 18:6**11:01** 58:22**11:08** 58:24 59:5**12** 52:5**12:00** 59:16

89:21

12:15 59:17

95:14
12:20 106:19,20
12:22 107:6
12:30 2:17 8:1
 59:19
1235 1:13
14 37:10
15 16:8 33:6
 46:2 56:22
 57:19 77:5
15-year-old 57:3
 57:20
16 83:3
16th 41:16
18 90:8
1927 105:18
1950s 21:16
1964 37:8
1969 6:4
1982 24:4 26:9
1991 51:25

2

2,471 106:15
2.7 19:9
2:30 16:11
20 11:22 45:13
 48:8 65:7,15
 68:8
2006 20:23 51:25
 51:25
2007 24:5 26:13
2014 1:16 2:2
 5:23 6:2,3
 106:23

2016 19:8**204** 4:18 20:6

23:4,4 40:10

69:13,18 73:19

75:14 76:19

80:4 83:12

95:9

24 62:16**25** 24:12,22

63:20

27 26:5**3**

3 19:11
3-11-2015 108:20
3.5 43:25 44:2,6
 58:1 71:4,5

103:6
30 43:14
306 6:4
32 26:10
33 74:10
3612 108:18

4

4 80:18
4.0 18:16 44:2,6
 44:24 55:13
 65:8 69:13,22
 75:5 78:19
 80:16
4.2 80:19,19
4:00 41:24
40 2:15 66:6,10
45 20:4

5

5 1:16 2:2 6:2
 98:14
5th 5:23
5:00 7:8 106:23
50 66:6,10
50s 21:15
55 106:4,12,14

7

7 98:14 106:5,12
 106:23
7th 2:21 7:8
70s 86:20
71 51:25

8

8 19:11 98:14
8th 37:19,19
8:00 93:12
80 9:3
86 105:23

9

9 37:10
9th 37:18
9:00 1:15 89:20
9:15 59:18
9:20 2:3 5:23
 59:18 106:19
92 82:11
99 42:25